

THE NORTH KOREAN PEOPLE'S ARMY:
ITS RISE AND FALL, 1945-1950

by
Kim, Kook-Hun

A Thesis
Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of London
King's College London

August 1989

ProQuest Number: 11010462

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



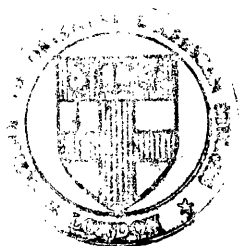
ProQuest 11010462

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346



Abstract

The North Korean People's Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1945-1950

The aim of this thesis is to look into the structural, ideological and strategic features of the (North) Korean People's Army from its birth in late 1945 to the débâcle in late 1950, thereby forming a coherent and up-to-date account of the early KPA, which is essential to a proper enquiry into the origins and character of the Korean War.

The cadre members of the KPA were from three origins: the Soviet-affiliated Kim IlSung group; the Yen'an group, the returnees from China; and the Soviet-Korean group, a functionary group of the Soviet occupation authorities. Among them, the Kim IlSung group was to play the key role in the making of the KPA. The People's Army started from the founding of the Pyongyang Institute in November 1945. By August 1946 the basic conditions and preparations for building the regular armed forces of North Korea were settled. By February 1948, when the founding of the KPA was proclaimed, the People's Army was well established; though, the actual strength of the KPA remained rather modest until mid-1949. The rapid expansion and modernisation of the KPA took place between July 1949 and May 1950. The quantum leap of the KPA during March to May 1950 was exceptionally clear evidence of the likelihood of the outbreak of war in the near future.

The Korean War decision was made among the leaders of North Korea, the Soviet Union, and the PRC, during the winter of 1949-50. Most probably it was initiated by the North Korean leadership who were increasingly confident of their strengthened position over the south which itself was in disarray. The all-out attack against South Korea in June 1950 was only the final phase of the 'Southern Strategy' which the North Korean leadership had been pursuing since late 1945. It was neither the only alternative left nor a pre-emptive strike in a desperate mood. That the North Korean leadership started the invasion in an over-confident mood can be proven through the close examination of KPA preparations for and conduct of the war.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the rigorous and encouraging guidance of my supervisors, Professor Lawrence Freedman and Dr. Wolf Mendl, whilst writing this thesis, as well as during my stay at King's College London.

I am greatly indebted to the following in shaping the main themes of this work: Mr. Kim Nam-sik of the Research Institute for International Affairs, Mr. Kim Ki-ok of the War History Compilation Committee, Mr. Kim Won-jin of the Institute for the Unification and Security of Korea, and Professor Kim Hak-joon of the Seoul National University.

I am pleased to mention my fond memory of Professors Allan R. Millett and Richardson Murray of the Ohio State University, who supervised my M.A. thesis from which this work has grown.

I wish to thank most warmly Mr. Corin Levick, who has typed this work with perseverance, proficiency and good humour.

I owe a great deal to my government for allowing me this valuable opportunity of studying overseas in the most favourable possible conditions.

Lastly, but not the least, my thanks are due to my wife and colleague, Professor Soon-Ae Yoo-Kim and our beloved children, Jeong-keun and Kyung-hee, who have endured several years' separation from me and transformed the years into an ever productive and meaningful period. Thoughts of them have been the greatest encouragement for me for the last four years.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in the text

CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DFRF	Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland
DNUFNK	Democratic National United Front of North Korea
DNUFSK	Democratic National United Front of South Korea
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FDSA	Fatherland Defence Support Association
FEAF	[US] Far East Air Force
KCP	Korean Communist Party
KMAG	[US] Military Advisory Group to Korean
KPA	Korean People's Army
KVA	Korean Volunteer Army
KVC	Korean Volunteer Corps
NEPRA	North-East People's Revolutionary Army
NEAJUA	North-East Anti-Japanese United Army
NKCP	North Korean Communist Party
NKPC	North Korean People's Committee
NKPPC	North Korean Provisional People's Committee
NKWP	North Korean Workers' Party
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
SKWP	South Korean Workers' Party
UNTCOK	United Nations Temporary Committee on Korea
USAMGIK	United States Army Military Government in Korea
WPK	Workers' Party of Korea

Abbreviations used in notes

HNKA	History of the North Korean Army
HUNF	History of the United Nations Forces in Korea
ISNK	Intelligence Summary, North Korea
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States

CONTENTS

Abstract
Acknowledgements
Abbreviations

	INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER ONE	POLITICAL SETTING	16
CHAPTER TWO	THE ORIGINS OF THE CADRES	25
	The Partisan Group The Yen-an Group The Soviet-Korean Group	
CHAPTER THREE	LAYING THE GROUNDWORK, 1945.8 - 1946.8	42
	Political Setting Setting up Security Forces The P'yongyang Institute The Security Cadres Training Corps	
CHAPTER FOUR	THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KPA, 1946.8 - 1948.12	57
	Political Setting Growth of the People's Army Strengthening the Security Forces The Founding of the Korean People's Army	
CHAPTER FIVE	TOWARDS A WAR, 1948.12 - 1950.6	79
	Political Setting The Expansion of the KPA Pseudo-Warfare between North and South Korea The Last Preparations for the War	
CHAPTER SIX	THE TRIALS OF THE WAR, 1950.6 - 1950.12	131
	The Complacent War Plan The Incomplete Breakthrough Advance by Attrition The Unacceptable Defeat	
	CONCLUSIONS	186
Appendices		196
Notes		206
Bibliography		227

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is two fold: (1) to examine the structural, ideological and strategic features of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) from its birth in late 1945 to the débâcle in 1950; and (2) to establish a theory on the origins and nature of the Korean War, inter alia through the examination of the KPA in that era.

The literature on the early KPA is not rich. Notwithstanding growing concern, accumulating knowledge and novel viewpoints in North Korean and Korean War studies, the history of the early KPA has remained meagrely researched. In 1986 Keith D. McFarland, an American writer, produced a superb reference work on the Korean War entitled, The Korean War; An Annotated Bibliography. Among over 2,300 entries in this work there is no book-length account in western languages dealing exclusively and comprehensively with the early history of the KPA. In 1985 the Institute for Korean War Studies in Seoul produced a thorough reference work titled Han'guk Chonchaeng Kwankae Charyo Munhonchip [Collections of Source Materials on the Korean War], which included materials in Korean and Japanese. Among more than 3,500 entries in this reference work, there are only a few scholarly works on the early KPA, with the exception of primary source materials mostly produced by the ROK Ministry of National Defence or its armed services. As such the history of the early KPA has remained a wasteland in the West, having many questions unresolved even in the cases of basic data, such as names of prominent figures, dates and places of major events, or lineage of units.

The poor state of in-depth study of the early KPA does not necessarily mean that relevant knowledge and materials are wanting. The problem is that existing knowledge and source materials related to this topic are uneven in their quantity and quality and have yet to be organised into a coherent system of knowledge. It would be helpful to examine the situation of relevant knowledge and source materials in

three parts: the origins of the cadres of the KPA; the founding and development of the KPA from late 1945 to June 1950; and the employment of the KPA in the first year of the war.

To trace the origins of the cadres of the KPA is actually to inquire into the Korean communist movement before 1945. In this field significant scholarly works have been produced only in the late 1960s. In 1967 Dae-sook Suh produced The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948, probably the first significant work in this field. In 1972 Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-sik Lee produced Communism in Korea in two volumes, a monumental work in Korean communism and North Korean studies. During 1967 and 1976, Kim Chun-yop and Kim Ch'ang-sun produced Han'guk Kongsanchuui Undongsa [History of the Korean Communist Movement] in five volumes, perhaps the standard work in this field. With the publication by the two Kims of the above work, it may well be said that the pre-1945 history of the Korean communist movement has been organised into a coherent system of knowledge. Though there are still many controversies and questions to be settled in this field, as far as the origins of the cadres of the KPA are concerned it has become possible to get an established and fairly detailed knowledge.

On the founding and development of the KPA from 1945 to 1950 the volume and quality of the information available to westerners has not much improved since the early 1950s, when western intelligence reports comprised the main source on this issue. In 1960 Roy. E. Appleman produced South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, volume one in the series, The United States Army in the Korean War, the official history of the Korean War, by the US authorities. Although Appleman's book is a definite work on the military aspects of the first six months of the Korean War, his account of the KPA before the war is sketchy and remains largely within the range of the "History of the North Korean Army", an intelligence report prepared by US Far East Command, G-2 Section, in July 1952. In spite of this limitation, Appleman's account on the early KPA has been the main source of knowledge on this topic to many western scholars. In 1967 the War History Compilation

Committee of ROK Ministry of National Defence produced Haebang-kwa Kon'gun [Liberation and Establishment of ROK Armed Forces], the first volume of Han'guk Chonchaengsa [History of the Korean War], the official Korean War history, by the ROK authorities. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, contains one chapter dealing with the early KPA exclusively. Since the publication of this work there has been little original research, official or scholarly. As a result, even some new findings have not been fully incorporated into a coherent knowledge of the early KPA. So it is fair to say that the existing knowledge in the West regarding the early KPA is in a poor situation compared to that regarding the origins of the cadres.

The main cause for the meagre state in the existing knowledge of the early KPA is that there are too few primary source materials accessible to western scholars. Before the Korean war the existence of the KPA had been a closed book both to foreign powers and to the North Korean people. Even among the leadership structure of the North Korean regime those who were not directly involved in the making and running of the KPA had little idea of what was going on with the KPA. In this circumstance relevant information, let alone archival materials, regarding the pre-war KPA was seriously limited to western sources. A consolation for western scholars interested in Korean studies is the research potential of the famous 'seized materials' deposited in the Washington National Records Centre, Suitland, Maryland. Those 'seized materials' are 'probably the most valuable collection of records anywhere in the world outside of North Korea concerning the political, economic and military activities during the 1945-50 period'.¹ However, these materials have not been fully utilised by western scholars yet. A reason for this insufficient use of these materials is, though not an intrinsic one, the language problem to most westerners. Without a good knowledge of the Korean and Japanese languages, and Chinese characters, together with military terminology, these 'seized materials' are not easily accessible. For these reasons the knowledge on the early KPA has not advanced much since the early 1950s, when the "History of the North Korean Army" was produced.

On the conduct of KPA operations in the Korean War vast volumes of official histories from South and North Korea and the United States (and some Commonwealth countries) provides sufficient basic data. Appleman's South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu is indispensable. Two other volumes in the series, The United States Army in the Korean War should also be consulted. From 1972 to 1973 the War History Compilation Committee of the ROK Ministry of National Defence produced The History of the United Nations in the Korean War in five volumes. During 1979 and 1980, the War History Compilation Committee completed eleven volumes of Han'guk Chonchaengsa [History of the Korean War], each over 1,000 pages. In 1981 North Korea produced three volumes of Choguk Haebang Chonchaensa [History of the Fatherland Liberation War], in the series Choson Chonsa [The History of Korea]. Apart from these official histories, hundreds of memoirs, narratives, official documents, scholarly accounts of the Korean War produced in the West have relevance to the KPA performance in the war. However, academic works mainly focused on the military activities of the KPA during the war are not rich. Most literature on the Korean War, produced in the West, has continued to focus on the political or diplomatic features of the war, mainly on the part of the United States and its allies.

The major concern of this thesis is, in the first place, to form a coherent account of the early KPA ranging from the pre-1945 accounts of its cadre members to the war time performance in 1950. Major research efforts were given to the founding and development stage of the KPA since the knowledge on this period is the weakest, at present, despite the fact that the period is crucial. For this purpose I have looked through the 'seized materials', which amounts to about 1,000 archive boxes. Though the materials directly related to this topic were not rich in quantity, in terms of quality many of the newly found materials were invaluable, especially, in tracing the lineage of KPA units and confirming the preparations of the KPA for the invasion. For instance it has become possible to draw the whole picture of the invasion plan, which was a surprisingly complacent one, envisaging a three-week war. It is also established that the KPA strength in June

1950 was not so big as had been estimated by western intelligence. Another major primary source for this study is Kim IlSung's Works, especially volumes one to six. With code-breaking efforts and imagination a lot of information regarding the early KPA and the political direction of the KPA was extracted from Kim IlSung's Works. By correcting some inaccuracies and inconsistencies through newly available materials a much more coherent account of the early KPA has been possible.

It is the contention of this author that the cross-examining of the KPA is a key clue to looking into the origins and nature of the Korean War. Controversies on this issue can be categorised into three questions:

1. Who started the war?
2. Who masterminded the war?
3. What caused the war?

On the question 'who started the war?' it is now firmly established that the North, not the South, started the war. A sufficient amount of evidence undeniably points to North Korea as initiating the war. Among others documents captured by the UN Forces provide detailed accounts of the mobilisation, movement and deployment of KPA troops for the all-out attack in June 1950. Earlier in the 1950s, when extant evidence was not easily accessible to western scholars, there were some scholars who attempted to build the case for American and South Korean responsibility for the initiation of the hostilities.² But, as will be presented in the thesis concretely, it is now a firmly established view that North Korea started the invasion.

There are also some scholars who hold the view that the question of 'who started the first shooting on 25 June 1950' is of secondary importance.³ They argue that North Korea might have been caught in a trap prepared by shrewd leaders, who had been expecting a communist initiative which would cause indignation in the American people. This

kind of interpretation is very searching, but somewhat speculative. It is true that, judging from the results, the Korean War provided the Truman Administration with the opportune rationale for the implementation of policy initiatives embodied in the NSC 68. But it would be too much to accuse the Truman Administration of having misrepresented itself purposefully to lure the communists into a miscalculated adventure. Such a speculation is, just as the famous Roosevelt conspiracy theory on the Pearl Harbour attack by the Japanese, too dubious and has not been substantiated with reliable extant evidence. Evidence attests to the proposition that what the North Korean attack imposed upon the US government was a strategic surprise in the deepest sense, as meticulously described in Glen D. Paige's The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950.

The question of 'who masterminded the war?' is closely related with the question, 'what caused the war?' So it is preferable to examine these questions in a package. On this question it is fair to acknowledge that until we gain access to archival materials in Pyongyang, Moscow (and Peking) many parts of various explanations will have remained conjectural. Having said that, controversies on this question have converged on two kinds of explanations. The so-called traditionalists view is that the Korean War was a Soviet-directed or initiated scheme. Detailed examination of the traditionalist view will be presented in the main text. But to say the conclusion first, it is now outdated and insufficient to explain the cause of the Korean War primarily in the context of an 'expansionist-minded Stalin'. The currently accepted view of the majority of Korean War historians is to see the war as the result of a complex interplay of local as well as international factors. Now it is almost established that the North Korean leadership initiated the idea of a Korean War, and Stalin, after consultation with Mao Tse-tung, approved and supported the North Korean initiative. This author takes the same position as the above proposition. The main purpose of this thesis is to advance this proposition with more reliable evidence and consistent logic.

In looking into the Korean War decision by communist leaders the crucial point is to settle the question, 'when the decision was made?' This is because the timing of this decision is the key factor in analysing the rationale and reasoning of the Korean War decision. Here you should distinguish a 'declared aim' from the 'action programme'. Since 1945, the North Korean leadership avowedly professed the unification of Korea as their supreme goal. However, the open declaration of intent to reunify Korea in 1945 and later, did not necessarily mean that North Korea was preparing the invasion of South Korea from 1945 on. Let me give an analogy. Hitler made it clear from his early days that Russia should be eliminated as first-rate power in Europe. However Operation 'Barbarossa' which was to realise his long dream was decided only in the late summer of 1940. The 'Directive 21' which ordered preparation for Operation 'Barbarossa' was issued on 18 December 1940. The actual beginning of the German invasion of Russia started on 6 June 1941. Is it not possible to compare the the conquest of Russia to the unification of Korea, and the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 to the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950? Then what was the likely date for a 'Directive 21' for the KPA? In other words what was the likely date when the declared goal of the unification had been transformed into the action programme? If we settle this question the controversies regarding the origins and nature of the Korean War will be much advanced. The cross-examining of the KPA in this thesis will be a step forward towards this settlement.

This thesis is organised into six chapters each dealing with the following central questions. Chapter One is on the international and domestic settings of the Korean issue leading to the Korean War. Chapter Two asks the question 'who were the cadres of the early KPA?' Chapter Three addresses the policies and preparations in founding the KPA. Chapter Four examines the growth and development of the KPA into a full-fledged regular army. Chapter Five is on how the KPA was prepared for the Korean War. Chapter Six is a critical assessment of KPA performance in the war. In the conclusion a brief anatomy of the

KPA will be presented together with a summary of my explanation of the origins of the Korean War.

Chapter One is on the making of post-World War II Korean problems in the context of US-USSR rivalry and its impact on the course of the North-South confrontation, focusing on the analysis of the strategic reasoning of both superpowers towards the Korean issue. The main themes of this Chapter are as follows. First, the US political and military leaders failed to pay due attention to Korean aspirations in the making and implementing of their Korean policy. Second, the Russians and their North Korean protégé made use of this Korean aspirations factor much more adroitly than the Americans for the advancement of their causes and interests. Third, the two basic political lines which the North Korean leadership under the Soviet tutelage formulated - the Democratic Base Line and United Front Line - were two faces of the same coin in their efforts for the communisation of the whole of Korea. As such this chapter is intended to form a frame of reference which can be applied in comprehending the interplay of international as well as domestic factors regarding the Korean issue, in the late 1940s.

Chapter Two is on the central figures in the making of the KPA: their social and educational backgrounds, military career, connection with the Soviet Union and Chinese communists, the degree of coherence among each group and their future positions in the KPA and the North Korean regime. The cadres of the KPA were mainly from three groups: the Partisan group (later Kim IlSung group); the Yen'an group; and the Soviet-Korean group. Since the Partisan group was to play the key role in the making of the KPA, special attention will be given to the examining of this group. The identity of Kim IlSung has been controversial until very recently. It is now almost established that he was a junior figure in the anti-Japanese partisans in Manchuria in the 1930s, affiliated, first, with Chinese communists, and later, with the Soviet Army. A good understanding of these Manchurian-Korean partisans in the 1930s, their backgrounds, temperament, ability and comradeship is a prerequisite to the construction of KPA history.

Chapter Three is on the founding stage of the people's army. For this inquiry a proper understanding of the basic arrangements by the Soviet occupation authorities and their North Korean protégé for establishing a North Korean regime - the party, the government, the police system, and the army - is necessary. The main concern of this chapter is to make a clear distinction between the development of the security forces and the founding of the future people's army. So far there have been some confusions on this issue among western scholars. For example some scholars see the organisation of Boandae (the Security Unit) in late 1945 as the beginning of the people's army, which is not the case. Boandae was strictly a police force. Even if the people's army was disguised under the title of the Security Cadres Training Corps until February 1948, the organisers of the people's army made the distinction clear between a police force and an armed force from the very beginning of the organisation of these two forces.

Chapter Four is on the growth and development of the KPA as a regular armed force of North Korea. Emphasis will be given to the following: (1) the significance of the founding of the KPA in February 1948 (2) the policy and strategy of the Soviet occupation authorities and the North Korean leadership in fostering the KPA; and (3) the structural features and ideological orientation of the KPA. The main themes of this chapter are as follows. First, the founding of the KPA in February 1948 was a major initiative by the North Korean leadership towards the reunification issue. Second, the organisers of the KPA opted for a gradual approach to the development of the KPA, which was largely owing to the presence of the Soviet troops and the effective internal security system. Third, the foremost feature of the KPA was that it advocated a people's army inheriting the anti-Japanese struggle tradition of Kim IlSung and his associates.

Chapter Five traces the course of the immediate events and political decisions leading to the all-out war in June 1950 and the process of the KPA expansion in line with these events and decisions.

The main themes of this chapter are as follows. First, the Korean war decision was made among communist leaders by February 1950. The North Korean leadership initiated the idea and Stalin and Mao Tse-tung sanctioned and supported the plan. Second, the invasion of South Korea was the 'finalisation' of the 'southern strategy' rather than the only alternative left when all other methods had failed. To back up this proposition a new look into the pseudo-warfare between the north and the south from late 1948 to early 1950, in the form of guerrilla provocations and border conflicts, will be presented.

Chapter Six is a critical assessment of KPA performance in the first phase of the war. First, the North Korean leadership started the invasion from a much more complacent war plan and more modest strength than had been evaluated by western military experts and scholars. Second, the KPA performance was not so effective as to alleviate the disaster brought about by the political misjudgment of not predicting the massive US intervention. (The same was true with the UN Forces during their advance to the Yalu, which exacerbated, rather than alleviated, the political mistake of having taken the possibility of Chinese intervention lightly.) The main concern of this chapter is to analyse the strategic calculation behind the battles and campaigns rather than to present detailed descriptions of those battles and campaigns.

In the conclusion: first, an anatomy of the structural, ideological, and strategic features of the early KPA will be presented; second, a synthesis of arguments in this thesis regarding the North Korean leaders' reasoning on the Korean War decision will also be presented.

In the presentation of Korean names the Romanisation system adopted by ROK Ministry of Education in 1988 was used with the exception of Kim IlSung's and Rhee Syngman's names.

CHAPTER ONE

POLITICAL SETTING

During the 1945-1950 period, the political line of North Korean communists under the aegis of the Soviet Union can be summed up in two main themes; the Democratic Base Line and the United Front Line. The Democratic Base Line was meant 'to transform north Korea into a powerful democratic base for the building of a unified, independent and democratic state.'¹ The United Front Line was intended to 'form a united front with all the democratic political parties and social organisations in north and south Korea and strengthen it in every way'² in order to establish a unified government over the whole of Korea. The two lines were interlinked with each other and were being pursued together throughout the period, 1945-1950.

These two lines were in effect a North Korean version of Soviet policy on Korea during this period. Traditional wisdom regarding the Soviet policy on Korea in the aftermath of the Second World War has been that the Soviet Union had no master plan or elaborate programmes to communize Korea except for such general guidelines as 'a keen interest in Korea being a true democratic and independent country, friendly to the Soviet Union, so that in the future it will not become a base for an attack on the Soviet Union.'³ There is not enough explicit evidence to refute these suggestions flatly. Nevertheless, circumstantial evidence requires such themes to be qualified cautiously. At least it would be very unwise to assume that Soviet policy and preparations on North Korea at the initial stage of its occupation were approximate to those of the opposite number in South Korea - the United States.

The Soviet government was clear on the significance of the occupation of north Korea. The Soviet forces were not meant simply to

receive the surrender of the Japanese troops north of the 38th parallel. Even though the division of Korea into the US-USSR occupying zones along the 38th parallel was arranged hastily and expediently on the eve of the Japanese surrender, the historical and political significance of the 38th parallel was such as should have been felt immediately and obviously to all the parties concerned. The 38th parallel was none other than a precise manifestation of the developing rivalry between two opposing powers in East Asia and the West Pacific - the Americans and the Russians. By the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union which had so far been 'an' Asian power became 'the' Asian power whereas the United States which had so far been 'a' Pacific power became 'the' Pacific power. And the two powers met each other in Korea along the 38th parallel. That was the stark reality of power politics in the mid-1940s in East Asia and the West Pacific. Now that the Soviet Union secured north Korea, north Korea should be transformed into a sphere of Soviet influence. In April 1945 Stalin told Milovan Djilas; 'This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise.'⁴

There have been controversies on the question of why Stalin accepted the American proposal on the partition of the Korean peninsula between the US and Soviet troops in a seemingly favourable position in taking full control of the whole of Korea on the eve of the Japanese surrender. Did Stalin make the decision out of a desire to maintain allied cooperation with the United States? Did he anticipate securing a similar arrangement with regard to Japan? Or did he aim to secure a favourable position vis-à-vis the United States in other settlements in Europe? A pivotal point in this question is that the partition of the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel was, from the Soviet point of view, a political rather than a military issue.⁵

On the partition of Korea at the 38th parallel, concerns have so far focused on the decision-making process of US security planners and

political leadership. Traditional wisdom on this issue is that the partition was initially proposed from an urgent military consideration on the part of the United States to prevent advancing Soviet troops into north Korea from sweeping the whole of Korea. The fact is, as of 13 August 1945 when Stalin consented to the US proposal on the partition, Soviet troops operating in north Korea were not in a position to sweep the whole of Korea rapidly in terms of operational plan and strength. The 25th Soviet Army which entered north Korea from 8 August was only one of six armies comprising the First Far East Front, which was in turn a subsidiary body of the Soviet forces fighting under the command of Vasilievsky against the Japanese Kwantung Army. At that time, Vasilievsky's main concern was in trapping the Kwantung Army before it could retreat into its prepared positions in southern Manchuria. The mission of the 25th Soviet Army was, according to the initial operation plan, to prevent Japanese reinforcements moving from north Korea into southern Manchuria. So in mid-August 1945, in terms of intent and strength, the Soviet forces operating in Manchuria and the northernmost part of Korea, were not in a position to sweep the whole of Korea at once.⁶

Important was the fact that the Korean question as of August 1945 was not a sort of race between two competitors where the fastest get the most. The basic formula on the post-war settlement in Korea had been discussed between Roosevelt and Stalin well before the sudden collapse of Japan in August 1945. At the Yalta conference in February 1945, Stalin and Roosevelt concurred on the need of a trusteeship for Korea, composed of a Soviet, an American, and a Chinese representative. Stalin 'felt' that the British should be invited. However, Roosevelt did not feel it was necessary to invite the British into the trusteeship of Korea. On the period of the trusteeship Roosevelt 'felt' that from twenty to thirty years might be proper while Stalin said 'the shorter the period the better'.⁷ The Korean question had not been elaborated further than the ad hoc political understanding or oral assurance between Roosevelt and Stalin at the Yalta Conference for the rest of the war. The core of the Yalta agreement was that the post-war Korean settlement should be solved

politically through the common understanding of both superpowers. It was this political pledge rather than military correlation which induced Stalin to accept the US proposal to divide Korea along the 38th parallel at the end of the war.⁸

The American reasoning behind the trusteeship formula started from a necessity to stem growing Soviet influence in East Asia within the limits of US military capabilities. Although acknowledging the traditional interests of the Soviet Union in Korea, US security planners defined, from the early 1940s, Soviet control of the whole of Korea as a likely threat to the security of the United States in the post-war Pacific. To counter Soviet influence over Korea in the post-war era, the US security planners were seeking a political solution rather than preparing a military counterbalance in the Korean peninsula. Basically a naval, Pacific power, the United States was not favourable to the idea of sustaining a large contingent of ground forces in continental Asia. The trusteeship formula was, for the United States, such as to secure its basic security interests regarding Korea without involving itself in Korea militarily.⁹

Even though the trusteeship formula looked subtle and economic, it was based on many wishful premises and serious misjudgments. One premise was that with the completion of military operations in Korea there should be a military government represented by those countries which have a real interest in the future political status of Korea and 'that such military government should be organised on the principle of centralised administration with all of Korea administered as a single unit and not as separate zones.'¹⁰ (emphasis by author) As it turned out, a centralised military government (other than superficial Allied Councils) shared by both the United States (and its close allies) and the Soviet Union did not materialise in any of the occupied countries (Germany, Japan, Korea). If a centralised military government over the whole of Korea was unattainable, the prospect of a multilateral (virtually bilateral between the United States and the Soviet Union) trusteeship over Korea was also very obscure since the trusteeship would be in effect an evolution of the centralised US-USSR military

government in Korea with a political mantle. So the underlying premise of the US security planners that a centralised international administration over the whole of Korea could be established after the war ended, whether in the form of a centralised military government or a trusteeship, or a guardianship over a Korean interim government, was not well founded in reality.¹¹

The US political and military leaders were also lacking a proper appreciation of the internal situation of Korea in this period, a tendency which more or less continued throughout the occupation period until the outbreak of the Korean War. They overlooked the possibility that even if a genuine political compromise regarding the post-war status of Korea could be made between the United States and the Soviet Union, the whole course of post-war Korea would not be bound by that settlement alone. To determine the destiny of thirty million people with a long history and a strong sense of identity could not be simply a counting of beans or drawing of lines in the context of international power politics. The US leaders should have reckoned with Korean aspirations more seriously. Moreover, there was a strong possibility that the Soviet Union could make use of Korean aspirations more adroitly than the United States. Such a possibility turned out to be a reality less than couple of months after the war ended.¹²

In Korea liberated from thirty-five years' Japanese colonial rule, aspirations for restoring national pride and establishing a free and independent state was naturally the highest calling for all Koreans at that time. Without the proper understanding of the magnitude and direction of these aspirations, any Korean leader or foreign power was doomed to failure. The insensitivity and unpreparedness of the Americans with regard to Korean aspirations in the first phase of the occupation was almost scandalous. Korea was at first treated as a former enemy territory rather than an ally. Any sort of self-generated Korean government, including the Korean Provisional Government which had been for the last twenty-six years the most legitimate centre of the Korean independence movement, was flatly denied. The English language was promulgated as the official

language. The positions of influence in the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) were mainly filled with such Korean 'gentlemen' as were mostly persona non grata to grassroots Koreans because of their records of collaboration with or acquiescence to the Japanese colonial oppression. In a word, the Americans arrived in Korea in 1945 with too little knowledge of its history and people. They were to have great difficulties even in managing to police Korea, let alone making use of the internal dynamics of post-war Korea for the advance of their interest.¹³

On the other hand, the Russians acted along different lines from the American ones. The Soviet occupation authorities promptly took the lead in buying the goodwill of the Koreans. They declared that the Red Army (as such the Soviet Army was called in 1945) came to Korea as a liberator and friend, not as a conqueror and another master. All sorts of self-generated people's committees were recognised and nurtured while the presence of the Soviet occupation authorities was skilfully restrained. Pro-Japanese elements were ruthlessly purged from influential positions, not only political but economic, social, and cultural. Instead of a rapid socialist revolution, a 'people's democracy' embracing all but pro-Japanese elements and traitors was put forward. In short, the Soviet Union started from the beginning of the occupation with a good understanding of the significance and utility of Korean aspirations for restoring national pride and establishing an independent state.¹⁴

The real significance on the part of the two powers of understanding and utilising the internal Korean dynamics was that the development of such internal dynamics could significantly influence the US-USSR political pledge itself regarding the status of post-war Korea, the essence of which was that Korea should not be an exclusive domain of either side. It was even more the case that the Soviet Union could take the position that the two powers had no right to interfere with spontaneous Korean initiatives on their own affairs, for example, the unification issue. As far as the Soviet leaders and their Korean protégés could have faith in their ability and

preparedness to manipulate Korean aspirations, they did not have to cling to the trusteeship formula which 'would probably mean USSR having but one of three or four votes.'¹⁵ It was this reckoning of the communist leaders which was to shape the course of post-war Korea more substantially than the spirit of Yalta which had stipulated a multilateral trusteeship formula in which the Americans could, in the American reasoning, dominate.

At the Moscow meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain in December 1945, the Soviet government won a diplomatic coup over the US government on the Korea issue. The agreement was composed of four articles: (1) There shall be set up a Provisional Korean Democratic Government (2) A Joint Commission consisting of representatives of the two occupational commands in Korea shall be established in order to assist the formation of the Provisional Korean Democratic Government; (3) A four power trusteeship of Korea, period of up to five years, shall be considered on the proposals of the Joint Commission following consultation with the provisional Korean government (4) A conference of the representatives of the two commands in Korea shall be convened within a period of two weeks for the consideration of urgent economic and administration matters as well as permanent coordination.¹⁶

From Moscow's point of view the core of the Moscow agreement was the decision to establish a provisional Korean government prior to the coming of the four power trusteeship over Korea. (In Soviet terms, 'guardianship' over the provisional Korean government.) The Soviet government deemed 'that the unification of Korea under the leadership of the Korean national government was the important prerequisite for the restoration of Korea as an independent state and the establishment of bases for the development of the country on democratic principles.'¹⁷ A trusteeship was to be considered (emphasis by author) on the proposals of the Joint Commission in line with the wishes of the provisional Korean government. That is, a Korean government would come before, not after, trusteeship.¹⁸ If the ex-Koreanisation of the Korean issue - a diplomatic solution among major powers - was the

basic theme behind the American rationale of the trusteeship formula, the Koreanisation of the Korean issue was the basic strategy behind the Soviet rationale of the 'Korean government first' formula. The Soviet formula was a clear indication that the Soviet government was gaining confidence in their ability in mobilising Korean internal dynamics for the advancement of their interests in the whole of Korea. The United Front Line which was intended to produce a favourable condition for manipulating a unified Korean government was the embodiment of this 'Korean government first' formula.

During the period 1945-1950, North Korean communist leaders and the Soviet authorities were to act upon these strategic calculations, which were in turn translated into two basic political lines - the Democratic Base Line and the United Front Line, that is, (1) to build a strong 'Democratic Base' in possible areas - Soviet-occupied north Korea and (2) to launch an offensive to gain the hegemony of a future unified Korean government. It is possible to say that almost all the policy initiatives, achievements, strategies and tactics by the North Korean leadership and the Soviet authorities during this period can be comprehended within the context of these two basic political lines. The initiation of the Korean War by the North Korean leadership was a culmination of these two basic political lines based on their confidence in the strengthened Democratic Base of North Korean vis-à-vis a South Korea weakened by the various provocations by North Korea along the United Front line.

However, the internalisation of the Korean War came to evidence the fact that the Korean question in the late 20th century is still a major international issue which requires an international settlement as well as an intra-national solution. The North Korean failure in the invasion of South Korea in 1950 was more than anything else due to the fact that the North Korean leadership failed to pay due attention to the international nature of the Korean issue. In this regard, the Soviet Union which sanctioned and supported the North Korean initiative also made a mistake in the proper understanding of the US-

USSR pledge regarding the status of post-war Korea. So during the period 1945 to 1950 both the United States and the Soviet Union in the end failed in grasping the whole nature of the Korean issue properly. Both Korean leaderships in the north and the south were also lacking in the proper understanding of the Korean reunification and independence issues in their entirety. The five year history of post-war Korea was mainly an interplay of these four parties who had been pursuing their own goals in their restricted, and often ill-founded, perception of their opponents. Such was the international and domestic setting in which the KPA was born, grown, tested and rebuilt during the period, 1945-50.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGINS OF THE CADRES

Those who were to form the nucleus of the Korean People's Army were, for the most part, from three backgrounds: the Partisan group; the Yen'an group; and the Soviet-Korean group. Most of them had a good deal of political and military experience, largely in affiliation with the Soviet Union or the Chinese communists. The formation of a North Korean army was an alignment of these experienced men under the direction and support of the Soviet Union. Therefore a history of the KPA may well begin with the pre-1945 history of these three groups.

The Partisan Group

The Partisan group came mostly from the remnants of the Korean communists who had engaged in the anti-Japanese guerilla warfare in Manchuria in the 1930s. Ever since Japan annexed Korea in 1910, Manchuria had served as a strategic base for the Korean independence struggle abroad. During the 1910s and 1920s the mainstays of these anti-Japanese struggles in Manchuria were the nationalists. However, by the late 1920s, the nationalists' large-scale anti-Japanese fighting was waning. From the early 1930s small-scale guerilla activities by communists were gradually becoming the mainstream of the Korean independence movement in Manchuria. The growth of Korean communist activities in Manchuria was largely in line with the development of the Chinese communist movement in Manchuria.¹ After the Japanese took over Manchuria in 1931 (the Manchurian Incident) the CCP began to organise a united anti-Japanese front among Chinese and Korean communists in Manchuria. The first noteworthy formation of this kind was the First Division of the First Army of the North-East People's Revolutionary Army (NEPRA), organised by Yang Jing-yu (a

Chinese) in September 1933. By November 1934, Yang Jing-yu's unit expanded into the First Army of the NEPRA. By late 1935 another five armies of this kind were organised.²

In February 1936 most of the anti-Japanese armed formations in Manchuria were integrated into the North-East Anti-Japanese United Army (NEAJUA). The integration was in line with the 8.1 declaration of the CCP, issued on 1 August 1935, appealing to the whole of China for the formation of a united front against Japanese aggression. By the late 1930s the NEAJUA expanded into eleven armies, which were in turn regrouped into three route armies. In spite of its impressive titles such as army, route army (army group), the actual strength of the NEAJUA did not exceed a division-strength force having about 15,000 men and women at its peak. The title of each echelon was exaggerated possibly for two purposes: (1) to boost the morale of friendly people and to mislead the Japanese; and (2) to prepare for future expansion. Judging from various sources the titles were upgraded by two grades over the actual strength. So a 'division' was actually a battalion size unit with around 300 men. An 'army' was a regiment size unit having around 1,000 men.³

Many Korean communists took part in the NEAJUA. Koreans who commanded an 'army' were three - Ch'oe Yong-gon, Yi Hak-man, and Ho Hyong-sik. About half a dozen Koreans took command of a 'division'. Another dozen Koreans were made political commissars of an army or a division or a regiment. Among those the following figures were to play key roles in the KPA and political leadership of North Korea after 1945.⁴

Ch'oe Yong-gon	Commander, the 7th Army; later Minister of National Defence (1948-1957) and Head of State (Symbolic) (1957-1972)
Kim Ch'aek	Political Commissar, the 3rd Army; later Commander-in-Chief, the Front Command (1950) and Deputy Premier (1947-1951)

Kim IlSung	Commander, the 6th Division of the 2nd Army; later Supreme Commander (1950-), Premier (1946-1972) and Head of State (all powerful) (1972-)
Ch'oe Hyon	Commander, the 5th Division of the 2nd Army; later Minister of National Defence (1968-76)
An Kil	Political Commissar, the 14th Regiment of the 2nd Army; later Chief of the General Staff (1946-1947)
Kang Gon	Political Commissar, the 9th Regiment of the 5th Army; later Chief of the General Staff (1947-1950)

During the mid-1930s the NEAJUA was causing no small disturbance to the security of Manchukuo, a Japanese puppet regime, and were harassing the rear of the Japanese army which was then engaged in the invasion of China proper (from 1937 onwards). Some units led by Korean commanders infiltrated even into northern Korea across the Yalu river and inflicted a shock upon the Japanese security forces and boosted the morale of the Koreans in this region. The 'Battle of Poch'onbo' in June 1937, which was staged by Kim IlSung and his unit, was one of the most shocking incidents. Through this campaign Kim IlSung became known throughout northern Korea and southern Manchuria. Later the 'Battle of Poch'onbo' was to be an enormous political asset of Kim IlSung in his advancement in the NEAJUA and future career as a possible leader of North Korea.⁵

With the growth of the NEAJUA punitive campaigns of the Japanese Kwantung Army and the Manchukuo Army were also intensifying. The first large scale punitive campaign, which lasted nearly two years from May 1936, was not successful enough to put an end to the provocations of the NEAJUA. After the Nomonhan campaign in 1938, in which the Japanese Kwantung Army had suffered humiliating defeat by the Soviet Army under the command of Zhukov, the Japanese launched a massive retaliatory campaign against the NEAJUA. The campaign lasted two and a half years until the NEAJUA was almost uprooted by the end

of 1940. The NEAJUA suffered fatal defeats and was forced to scatter into China proper or the Soviet Union. Many Korean communists in the NEAJUA, including Kim IlSung and his followers, allegedly entered the Soviet Union by January 1941.⁶

Many conflicting versions have so far emerged as to Kim IlSung's whereabouts during the 1941-1945 period. Kim IlSung's own account of his activities during this period is brief and obscure:

In 1941 or thereabouts, during the most difficult period in the anti-Japanese struggle. We changed the line of struggle. We trained many cadres in the territory of the Soviet Union in anticipation of the future development of the revolution, with a view to preserving our forces, we switched over from large to small unit operations and intensified the underground struggle.⁷

Recent North Korean publications even deny that Kim IlSung left Manchuria for the Soviet Union during this period.⁸ Judging from various evidence, there is no denying that Kim IlSung, with other surviving members of the NEAJUA, escaping the pursuit of the Kwantung Army, entered the Soviet Union at around the end of 1940.⁹

The remnants of the NEAJUA who entered the Soviet Union in this period were to be utilised by the Soviet Army for the future Soviet-Japanese War. Those who crossed the border of the Soviet Union were, at first, to be cleared of suspicion of being Japanese espionage agents. After verifying their political and military backgrounds, the Soviet authorities placed them under the control of the Reconnaissance Bureau (intelligence section) of the Headquarters of the Far East Military District. The Reconnaissance Bureau organised the Chinese and Korean partisans into the 88th Special Brigade and placed them at Biyask, near Khabarovsk. Zhou Bao-zhong, who was former Commander of the 2nd Route Army of the NEAJUA, was appointed Commander of the brigade. Both Vice Commander and Chief of Staff were Soviet Army Majors. Ch'oe Yong-gon was appointed Political Commissar of the

brigade, together with two Chinese members. The brigade consisted of four battalions. Two of the battalion commanders were Koreans - Kim IlSung and Kang Gon. The brigade was in fact a company-size unit, totalling about 200. Among them, Koreans from the NEAJUA, numbered about 60. Chinese numbered about 100 and the rest were from the Soviet Army. Among the personnel from the Soviet Army there were a dozen Soviet-Koreans who had been serving in the Soviet Army for several years. The main task of the 88th Special Brigade was to train experienced Korean and Chinese partisans for reconnoitring activities in the future Soviet-Japanese war. The brigade was neither an institute to prepare party or government leaders nor a training centre for the secret police.¹⁰

The key members among Korean partisans in the 88th Special Brigade and important portfolios which they attained in the future KPA were as follows.¹¹

Ch'oe Yong-gon	Brigade Political Commissar; later Minister of National Defence (1948-1957)
Kim IlSung	Battalion Commander; later Supreme Commander (1950-)
Kang gon	Battalion Commander; later Chief of the General Staff (1947-1950)
Kim Ch'aek	Battalion Political Commissar; later Commander-in-Chief, the Front Command (1950)
An Kil	Battalion Political Commissar; later Chief of the General Staff (1946-1947)
Kim Il	Company Commander; later Director of the Cultural (Political) Training Bureau (1946-1950)
Kim Kwang-hyop	Company Commander; later Minister of National Defence (1957-1962)
Ch'oe Hyon	Company Commander; later Minister of National Defence (1968-1976)
Ch'oe Yong-jin	Company Commander; later Army Corps Commander (1950)

So Ch'ol	Company Political Commissar; later Chief of the General Political Bureau (1958-1960)
Ch'oe Kwang	Platoon Leader; later Chief of the General Staff (1963-1969, 1988-)
Yi Yong-ho	Platoon Leader; later Army Corps Commander (1950)
Yu Kyong-su	Platoon leader; later Army Corps Commander (1950)
Ho Bong-hak	Platoon leader; later Chief of the General Political Bureau (1960-1967)

Kim IlSung was at that time only one of five leading Korean partisans in the 88th Special Brigade. At least two men - Ch'oe Yong-gon and Kim Ch'aek - were more than equals to Kim IlSung.

Whereas the actual open hostilities between Japan and the Soviet Union came to occur only in August 1945, during the period 1941-1945 the activities of the 88th Special Brigade were actually limited to intelligence activities. The Korean and Chinese partisans were well acquainted with the geographical features of the rear of the Japanese Kwantung Army. Some of them had a good command of the Japanese language. The Korean and Chinese partisans received mainly such political and military training as was suitable for small reconnaissance operations and propaganda activities. All members of the brigade took part in small unit operations at least twice, and some as many as five times. On the whole, the military contribution of the 88th Special Brigade to the Soviet Far East Military District was not very significant. After Japan surrendered, most of the Korean members of the 88th Special Brigade returned to north Korea by mid-September 1945.¹²

The foremost feature of the Partisan group was that they were already seasoned political and military fighters when they returned to

north Korea. Most of them were still in their early 30's - notable exceptions were Ch'oe Young-gon, 45 years old, and Kim Ch'aek, 43 years old - as of 1945. They had been fighting guerrilla warfare for more than ten years by the time they returned to north Korea. Among them there were few who had received higher education - academic or military. There were virtually none who had received university or war college level education. Instead of regular, formal education they had forged themselves in the hardship of the real world.¹³

Members of the Partisan group came to have some ambivalent attitudes towards the CCP and the Soviet Union through their experiences in the NEAJUA and the 88th Special Brigade. When they were under the control of the CCP, the CCP was not in a position to impose fastidious discipline upon the Korean partisans. The Chinese and Korean partisans in the NEAJUA were fighting the formidable prowess of the Japanese armed and police forces. Without resorting to spontaneous and comradely cooperation from the Korean partisans, the Chinese leadership of the NEAJUA could not expect good results in the anti-Japanese united front. Therefore the relationship between Korean and Chinese partisans was cordial. The NEAJUA was literally a united army.¹⁴ Each divisional commander was actually commander-in-chief of an independent unit. Armies were an alignment of these independent divisions. In this sense Kim IlSung might well have thought that he is entitled to claim that he created a Korean People's Revolutionary Army in 1932, when he is allegedly said to have gathered a handful of Korean partisans for anti-Japanese struggle.¹⁵ As such Korean communists could maintain the position that they fought for their own cause, even while fighting under the overall control of the CCP. Meanwhile, in the 88th Special Brigade the Soviet officers were superiors, not comrades of the Korean partisans. Under these circumstances the Korean partisans were obliged to learn the wisdom and patience needed to serve 'Big Brother'. The surprising extent of flexibility and adaptability shown by the North Korean leadership in meeting various internal and external challenges in the years after 1945 seemed much influenced by their experiences in the 88th Special Brigade.

Although the partisans were fairly quick learners in practical things, the lack of normal education and limited scope of intellectual training remained bitter shortcomings. Most of them came to high positions in North Korea from late 1945, with Soviet backing. However, the actual running of the party and the government was, under Soviet instructions, mainly performed by more cultivated and experienced Korean communists - the Soviet-Koreans, the Yen'an group, and domestic communists. Even such important departments dealing with ideology, agitation and propaganda, and organisation were largely in the hands of other communists than the partisans.¹⁶ Most partisans were not only unable to master the 'theology' and social sciences of Marxism-Leninism but also unwilling to be bound by such pedantic doctrines. (It is no wonder that from the late 1950s Kim IlSung began to put forward a Chu-Ch'e idea, the so-called creative application of Marxism-Leninism into the reality of Korea.) This state of affairs continued until the mid-1950s when Kim IlSung and his partisan followers could manage their jobs for themselves with the help of newly emerging elites whom they had fostered since 1945.¹⁷

Until the mid-1950s, the bulk of the partisans were active mainly in the KPA. They had occupied the most important positions of the KPA from its birth in late 1945. In the making and running of the KPA, the contribution of other communists than the partisans - the Soviet-Koreans, the Yen'an group - was also enormous as in the case of running the party and government. However, Kim IlSung and his followers were keen enough not to lose the tight control of the KPA. The KPA was the bastion of the Partisan group. The Partisan group was well aware of the first rule in power politics that political power comes from the barrel of a gun. The solidarity among the Partisan group was much stronger compared to the Yen'an group or the Soviet-Koreans. It is no wonder that for the last forty years since the establishment of the Kim IlSung regime, there has not been a serious coup d'etat attempt in the KPA.¹⁸

The Yen-an Group

The Yen-an group grew out of the North China Korean Independence League and its military arm - the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA). The Independence League and the KVA was an assembly of left-wing Koreans who were affiliated with the Chinese communists in China proper. The leadership of the Independence League were mostly from senior Korean communists who had engaged in communist activities from the early 1920s. The cadres of the KVA were mostly from the youths who had taken part in anti-Japanese struggle from the late 1930s. While the leadership of the Independence League were to play mainly political roles in North Korea, the cadres of the KVA were incorporated into the KPA and were to play a major role in the making and running of the KPA.¹⁹

The forerunner of the KVA was the Korean Volunteer Corps (KVC) which was organised by Kim Won-bong, leader of the Korean National Revolutionary Party, in Hankow, China, in October 1938. The KVC was intended to mobilise Korean efforts in fighting against the Japanese invasion of China proper from July 1937. The KVC came into being under the auspices of the Military Committee of the Chinese Nationalist Government. At its birth in October 1938, the KVC had about 140 men. The cadres of the KVC were mostly graduates of the Xingzi Military Academy in Nanking, which had set up a special class for Korean youths. The KVC conducted mainly psychological warfare, such as inspiration of anti-war sentiment among Japanese soldiers and indoctrination of Japanese prisoners of war, together with intelligence activities. As of September 1940, the KVC numbered over 300 men, organised into three branches and operating over all Chinese theatres. Remarkable men in the KVC during this period were the following: Pak Hyo-sam, Commander of the First Branch; Yi Ik-song, Commander of the Second Branch; Kim Sae-il, Commander of the Third Branch; Kim Min-san; Chang P'yong-san; Yi Ch'un-am; Kim Han-jung; Kim Ung; Yi Sang-jo; Kim Ch'ang-man and Chang Chi-min.²⁰

Around late 1940, the KVC split into two groups. Until that time the KVC had been operating under the operational control of the Chinese Nationalist Government and the members had been scattered in twos or threes over all the theatres. So, the commanding authority of Kim Won-bong, Commander of the KVC, became very weakened. Many left-wing members of the KVC, especially in the 2nd Branch operating in North China, became affiliated with the CCP, which was then gathering Korean youths to set up a Korean unit under the auspices of the CCP. The Chinese Nationalist Government's weakening resistance against Japanese aggression and resuming anti-communist policy from early 1939 was certainly an important factor which eventually pushed the left-wing Koreans of the KVC into the arms of the CCP. As Kim Won-bong was willing to remain in the Nationalists' area, the left-wing Korean youths deserted the KVC and entered Yen-an, the seat of the headquarters of the CCP. By the middle of 1941, more than 80 per cent of the KVC members moved into Yen-an. Kim Won-bong and his followers, about 60 men, remained in Chungking, the seat of the Chinese Nationalist Government. Kim Won-bong agreed to establish a coalition between left and right Koreans. In accordance with this agreement the remaining members of the KVC were reorganised into the First Branch of the Korean Restoration Army of the Korean Provisional Government.²¹

The CCP had developed its own scheme to form a Korean unit from 1937. Mu Chong was appointed the organiser of this unit. Mu Chong was one of about ten Korean communists who participated in the Long March. He is said to have graduated from a Chinese military academy. At first he served a Chinese warlord. In 1925, he joined the CCP and during the Long March, he worked in the Operation Section of the Headquarters of the CCF. He was one of the founding members of artillery troops of the CCF.²² After the CCP settled into Yen-an in 1937, many left-wing Koreans including such prominent Korean communists as Ch'oe Ch'ang-ik and Han Bin entered Yen-an. They were to receive education at the famous Anti-Japanese Military and Political College, an education and training institute for the cadres of the CCP. Some Korean members of the NEAJUA who had entered the

Soviet Union in the middle of the 1930s and received military and political training there were also arriving in Yenian in this period. Prominent among them were Kim Ch'ang-dok, Bang Ho-san, and Yi Kwon-mu. The arrival of many KVC members was another encouragement to the CCP scheme of setting up a Korean unit. The CCP leadership and Mu Chong concluded at the end of 1940 that the time was ripe to set up a military organisation utilising these Koreans.²³

In July 1941, a Korean Volunteer Army (KVA) was formally launched in Jinnandong, Shanxi Province. Mu Chong was named Commander of the KVA. Pak Il-u, later Minister of the Interior of North Korea, was appointed Political Commissar and Pak Hyo-sam, former Commander of the 2nd Branch of the KVC, was appointed Chief of Staff. Total strength of the KVA was around 300 men at that time. Unlike the KVC which had mainly been engaged in propaganda and intelligence activities, the KVA took part in actual fighting against Japanese troops. Fragmentary information shows that the KVA scored some victories against the Japanese Army. By the end of the war in August 1945, the KVA had grown to around 1,000 men. Korean deserters from the Japanese army were the main source of personnel and arms.²⁴

After the defeat of Japan the advance column of the KVA entered Manchuria in late August 1945, following the Chinese Communist Forces. By incorporating many Korean vigilantes, the KVA unit reached a strength of about 2,500 men by September 1945. With these troops the KVA unit attempted to enter North Korea in late September. At the Yalu River bridge which links Korea with Manchuria, the KVA troops were halted by local Soviet occupation authorities. The official pretext of the Russians was that there could be no armed forces in Korea other than those of the Soviet Union and the United States. The KVA unit could not defy the Soviet authorities. So the KVA troops were obliged to remain in Manchuria until they were given permission to enter North Korea.

In late November 1945, the Soviet authorities gave permission for the KVA troops to enter North Korea. The KVA, which was boosted to a

strength of 4,000 men at that time, entered Sinuiju, a border city between Korea and Manchuria, on 18 November. Before the dawn of the day following its entry to Sinuiju, the KVA unit was taken by surprise and disarmed by Soviet troops and local Korean security forces. The Soviet authorities suggested that the seized weapons would be returned if the KVA troops would return to Manchuria. The KVA had no option but to succumb to this 'suggestion'. The hostility of the Soviet authorities was manifestly meant to curb possible Chinese influence in North Korea. As a consequence, leading figures of the Independence League and the KVA were obliged to return to North Korea in December 1945 only as individuals and not as members of an organised political or military organisation. Most mid-ranking cadres of the KVA were to return to North Korea much later, passing through three stages in accordance with the expansion scheme of the KPA.²⁵

While the advance column of the KVA was disputing with the Soviet authorities in late 1945, other cadres of the KVA were organising Korean youths in Manchuria into a volunteer force for the Chinese communists in preparation for the coming Chinese Civil War. Altogether four Branch Corps were organised by these Koreans by early 1946. The 1st Branch Corps was organised from the advance column of the KVA which had been chased back to Manchuria by the Soviet authorities in November 1945. The 1st Branch Corps was commanded by Kim Ung and its Deputy Commander was Bang Ho-san. The 3rd Branch Corps was organised by Yi Sang-jo, and its Deputy Commander was Kim Ch'ang-dok. The 5th Branch Corps was commanded by Yi Ik-song and Pak Il-u. The 7th Branch Corps was raised in China proper with Pak Hun-il as Commander. By April 1946 each brigade numbered around 5,400 men. With the intensification of the Chinese Civil War, these Korean volunteers were reorganised into regular divisions of the CCF. It was these Korean troops which entered North Korea during the period from July 1949 to April 1950 to augment the KPA in preparation for the Korean war. At the outbreak of the Korean War, the Korean veterans repatriated from China totalled about 30,000 men and offered very seasoned soldiers and able cadres to the KPA.²⁶

The cadres of the Korean Volunteer Army were invaluable assets in the making of the KPA. Although they were not whole-heartedly welcome in Soviet-dominated North Korea, the Soviet authorities and Kim IlSung were intent to make use of the manpower and experience of the KVA in the making and running of the KPA. More than 30 men from the KVA attained the rank of Major-General or above in the KPA by the mid-1950s. Among them prominent figures and their important portfolios in the KPA were as follows.²⁷

Mu Chong	Deputy Defence Minister (1946-1950)
Pak Il-u	Minister of the Interior (1946-1952)
Kim Ung	Commander-in-Chief, the Front Command (1951)
Bang Ho-san	Army Corps Commander (1950)
Yi Kwon-mu	Army Corps Commander (1950)
Kim Ch'ang-dok	Army Corps Commander (1950)
Pak Hun-il	Commander, the Security Forces (1950)
Wang Yon	Commander of the Air Force (1950)
Chang P'yong-san	Delegate to the Armistice Talks (1951)
Yi Sang-jo	Delegate to the Armistice Talks (1951)

Especially, Yi Kwon-mu and Bang Ho-san were the most able divisional commanders of the KPA during the first phase of the war. Later they also served well as army corps commanders. Kim Ung was one of two army corps commanders at the outbreak of the war. Pak Il-u was appointed Deputy Commander of the Sino-Korean Combined Forces in late 1950. Mu Chong, the senior figure of the KVA and the protégé of the CCP leadership, was too proud of himself to be a subordinate of Kim IlSung. But under the dominance of Soviet power his fate was from the first doomed. In the making of the KPA he served as Chief of the Artillery Training Bureau and Deputy Defence Minister. After the collapse of the KPA in late 1950, he became the first victim of Kim IlSung's purge.²⁸

The cadres of the KVA had better social and educational backgrounds than the Partisan group. Most members of the Korean

Volunteer Corps which came to constitute the core of the KVA were among the most educated and active Korean youths in China in the late 1930s. The Korean deserters from the Japanese Army who augmented the KVA in the early 1940s had been in most cases attending higher education institutions before they were conscripted into the Japanese Army. The Korean communists who entered Yen-an in the late 1930s, who became spiritual and political leaders of the youths in the KVA, had been ardent and intelligent Korean communists from the early 1920s. In addition to this good educational background, promising youths in the KVA, received high quality education and training in political activities and military affairs from the Chinese communist leadership in Yen-an. Unlike the Korean partisans in the NEAJUA, who were mainly affiliated with relatively low-profile figures of the CCP, these KVA members had the opportunity to contact the highest leadership of the CCP. Such good educational background and abundant experiences of the cadres of the KVA were to be aptly utilised by Kim IlSung and the Soviet occupation authorities in the making and running of the KPA.²⁹

The Soviet-Korean Group

The Soviet-Koreans were mostly descendants of Korean emigres in the Soviet Union. From the latter half of the 19th century thousands of Koreans mostly from the north-eastern region of Korea began to emigrate to the Russian Maritime Province, mainly to escape from political oppression and economic strife. By the late 1910s, about 200,000 Koreans were reported living in the Maritime Province. Most of those Koreans were by that time acculturated to Russia and some of them were affected by communism. In 1918 a Korean Communist Party was organised in Khavarovsk by these Soviet-Koreans. This was the first communist party ever set up by Koreans. However, the influence of the Soviet-Korean communists upon the overall course of the Korean communist movement was not significant.³⁰

In 1937 the Soviet government forced Korean residents in the Maritime Province to move to Central Asia. At that time the

Soviet-Koreans numbered around 250,000. The Soviet government was aiming to appease Japan, which feared the possible use of these Koreans by the Soviet Union in the future Japan-Soviet conflict. In the new territory, the Koreans were mostly engaged in reclamation works. Some promising youths received higher education and became members of the CPSU. By the end of the Second World War a pool of able and experienced Soviet-Koreans had emerged in the Soviet Central Asian republics. It was this pool of Soviet-Koreans who were to render technical services to the Soviet occupation authorities in North Korea.³¹

In late August 1945, the first group of the Soviet-Koreans arrived in P'yongyang following the Soviet occupation forces. They belonged to the Romaneynko Command, the civil administration department of the Soviet occupation forces. In mid-September, the Soviet-Korean members of the 88th Special Brigade arrived in Wonsan along with the Partisan group. The Soviet-Koreans from these two groups served mainly as 'intermediaries' between the Soviet occupation authorities and Korean leaders (including nationalists, at that time) during the initial phase of the occupation. By December 1945, about eighty Soviet-Koreans had arrived in North Korea, mostly selected from the Soviet-Korean residents in Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan. They were more able experts in party works, government administration, and military affairs than the 'intermediaries'.³²

In the making and running of the KPA, the Soviet-Koreans furnished the bulk of instructors, interpreters, technical experts and political commissars. Among them prominent figures and their portfolios in the KPA were as follows;³³

Nam Il	Chief of the General Staff (1951-1953)
Kim Il	Deputy Chief, Cultural (Political) Training Bureau (1946-1950)
Yu Song-ch'ol	Chief, the Operations Bureau (1949)
Pak Kil-nam	Chief, the Engineers Bureau (1948-50)
Kim Yol	Chief, the Rear Services Bureau (1950)

Yi Ch'un-baek	Chief, the Reconnaissance Bureau (1950)
Han Il-mu	Commander of the Navy (1950)
Kim Bong-yul	Commander of the Artillery Command (1951)
Ki Sok-bok	President of the P'yongyang Institute (1948-1950)

The Soviet Koreans were basically part of the Soviet military government rather than a Korean communist group with its own identity. They were Soviet citizens and held membership of the CPSU. In view of their dubious identity, their influence upon the grassroots people in North Korea was limited. The fate of Ho Ka-i, once the real power of the party apparatus during 1945-1950, but the victim of Kim Il-sung's purge in 1953, well manifested the limit of the power and influence of this group in North Korea. In Korea liberated from long years' Japanese colonial oppression, a record of anti-Japanese struggle was a necessary condition of being a national leader. The Soviet-Koreans were lacking in this crucial credential. They were basically functionaries serving the Soviet military government. The Soviet authorities did not expect them to do more than that. In the making and running of the KPA, they were to play the role of functionaries between the Soviet 'advisers' and the indigenous military leaders - the partisans.³⁴

To sum up the origins of the cadres of the KPA, most of them started their military and political activities during the anti-Japanese struggle in the 1930s. In the course of these struggles they were inevitably affiliated with the Soviet Union or Chinese communists. Those who were to constitute the mainstream of the KPA were mostly from the Soviet-affiliated Partisan group. Those who were to serve the Partisan group in the making and running of the KPA were mostly affiliated with Chinese communists. The Soviet-Koreans who were to serve as functionaries of the KPA were actually a part of the Soviet military government apparatus. Reflecting the revolutionary nature of the anti-Japanese struggle the cadres of the KPA were tenacious in temperament, and abundant in initiative. However, those revolutionaries were, especially the Partisan group, lacking in

strategic competence and managerial skills necessary for managing a regular armed force. The meticulous direction of the Soviet occupation authorities and extensive technical support by Soviet advisers and the Soviet-Koreans were to make up for such deficiencies in the KPA leadership. Nevertheless, the limited scope of experience and capability of the cadres of the KPA was to remain as a serious defect in the KPA for some years to come.

CHAPTER THREE

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK; 1945.8-1946.8

The Soviet occupation authorities and their Korean protégés set about organising a regular army shortly after their arrival in north Korea. The organising of a regular army was one of three immediate tasks, together with building a communist party and a government. These three tasks were to go abreast of each other in transforming North Korea into a socialist country. In building a regular army the communist leaders took a prudent approach preferring gradual development. Since the Soviet forces were offering credible defence against external threat, and police and militia forces were effectively policing internal strife, the regular army of North Korea was able to take a step-by-step advance toward a compact military organisation. The first phase of this development ranged from late 1945 when a politico-military academy was founded, to August 1946 when a Security Cadres Training Corps was established.

Political Setting

On 8 August 1945, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan, and from 10 August, the Soviet forces began to invade north Korea. Detachments of the Soviet forces landed at Najin on 12 August and at Ch'ongjin on 13 August. An advance column of the Soviet forces entered P'yongyang on 26 August. The Soviet forces continued to advance southward until they reached the 38th parallel in early September. On 26 August, the Soviet forces established a 'Headquarters, the Soviet Forces in North Korea' in P'yongyang. Colonel-General Ivan Chischakov, Commander of the 25th Army, took charge of the occupation command. Apart from Chischakov's command, the Romanyenko Command, a civil administration department of the 25th

Army was established under the command of Major-General Andrei Romanyenko, who was to perform the day-to-day business of administering North Korea. In addition, Major-General Lebjedjeev, Political Commissar of the 25th Army, was also one of the triumvirate in the Soviet occupation authorities. However, real power rested with Colonel-General Terenti Shtykov, Political Commissar of the Far Eastern Military District. Shtykov had abundant experience in party political affairs and had participated in various front armies in the Second World War. Being political commissar of the front army, Shtykov's prestige almost equalled that of such Marshals of the Soviet Union as Rokossovsky, Konev, or Malinovsky. It was he who actually created and supervised the North Korean regime during the Soviet occupation period.¹

Unlike the United States Army Government in Korea (USAMGIK), the Soviet occupation authorities did not establish a military government over North Korea. Instead, they ruled North Korea through Koreans. In theory, the Korean people were on their own, but in practice, it was the Soviet authorities who had final authority over North Korea. This policy of indirect rule was a product of pre-1945 Soviet experiences in the treatment of Central Asian minorities and Outer Mongolia. The basic principles of this indirect rule formula were the following: (1) the need for a strong indigenous regime; (2) the usefulness of the Soviet political-Stalinist-system; (3) the reservation of internal political power in the hands of Soviet personnel or in the hands of natives thoroughly loyal to the Soviet Union; and (4) the necessity of a reform programme and a democratic popular facade.²

As early as 19 August 1945, before the Soviet forces arrived in P'yongyang, a South Pyongan Province Committee for Preparation for Korean Independence was organised in P'yongyang under the leadership of Cho Man-sik with around twenty members. Among them only two men were communists, reflecting the weakness of the communists in this province. Albeit a civic organisation in the P'yongyang area, the

committee had great influence and prestige all over north Korea owing to Cho Man-sik's leadership and the geo-political significance of its location, P'yongyang. By 26 August, when the Soviet forces arrived in P'yongyang, the committee was functioning as the central authority for north Korea.³

On 29 August 1945, the Soviet authorities re-organised the preparatory committee with more communists. The committee was renamed the South P'yongan People's Political Committee. The Soviet authorities intended to create a coalition of communists and non-communists for the time being while they were consolidating their political base in North Korea. By 15 September, altogether five provincial people's committees were established in North Korea except for North Hamkyong Province, in which a people's committee was established on 26 October. On 8 October, the Soviet authorities convened a meeting of representatives of the five provincial committees. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the coordination of the business of the people's committees. On 19 November, a North Korean Administration was organised. The North Korean Administration was the first embryonic government over North Korea and was headed by Cho Man-sik. The administration consisted of the following ten bureaus: Industry, Transportation, Agriculture, Commerce, Communication, Finance, Education, Health, Justice and Security Bureaus.⁴

Whilst making a government, the Soviet authorities were also contriving a communist party. Immediately after the surrender of Japan, domestic Korean communists in south Korea set about reconstructing the Korean Communist Party (KCP), which had been disbanded in 1928 by the order of the Third Communist International. On 11 September 1945, they announced the re-creation of the Korean Communist Party in Seoul, with Pak Hon-yong as its leader. As in south Korea, the communists in north Korea resumed political activities in their own provinces and localities soon after the surrender of Japan. Among them, Hyon Chun-hyok, O Ki-sop, Chang Sun-myong, Chong Tal-hyon, and Yi Chu-ha were prominent figures.

These communist leaders organised provincial or local party branches of the KCP in late August to September 1945, based upon the communist organisational principle that there should be only one communist party in a country. For them the only legitimate communist party in Korea was the KCP under the leadership of Pak Hon-yong in Seoul.⁵

From late September 1945, the Soviet authorities were busy contacting these domestic communists. On 10 October, the Romanyenko Command summoned leaders of all the provisional branches of the KCP in north Korea. On 13 October, at the Conference of the North Korea Five Provincial Party Representatives and Enthusiasts, a North Korean Branch Bureau of the KCP was organised. Kim Yong-bom, a domestic communist affiliated with the Soviet authorities, was elected General Secretary of the Branch Bureau. Kim IlSung was reported to have delivered a key note speech at the inauguration conference titled 'On building a Marxist-Leninist party in our country and its immediate tasks.' The North Korean Branch Bureau paid homage to the Central Committee of the KCP in Seoul; however, in reality, the establishment of the North Korean Branch Bureau was the first step to organise a communist party in north Korea apart from the domestic communist leaders centred in Seoul.⁶

On 17 December 1945, at the Third Enlarged Executive Committee Meeting of the North Korean Branch Bureau, Kim IlSung came to hold the reins of the Branch Bureau officially. He was elected General Secretary of the Branch Bureau. From this time on the Branch Bureau was changed in all but name into a North Korean Communist Party (NKCP).⁷ At this meeting, Kim IlSung delivered a key note speech. The speech touched upon such crucial themes as the following: (1) on improving the composition of the party; (2) on strengthening party unity and discipline; (3) on strengthening party links with the masses; (4) on the guidance of trade unions; (5) on the training of cadres and allocation of party members; (6) on the work of issuing party membership cards and keeping membership statistics; (7) on the question of the united front.⁸ Kim IlSung concluded the speech declaring that the political line of the party at the stage should be

to 'establish a unified democratic government in our country based on an alliance with all the democratic political parties and social organisations and to transform north Korea into a powerful democratic base for the building of a unified, independent and democratic state.'⁹ Kim Il Sung's rise to General Secretary and his authoritative speech indicated that Kim IlSung came to assume the commanding position among Korean communists in North Korea.¹⁰

On 8 February 1946, a North Korean Provisional People's Committee (NKPPC) was established. The NKPPC was to function as a government in North Korea until Korea had been unified. Kim IlSung was named Chairman of the NKPPC. Thus, Kim IlSung became head of government as well as chief of communist party in North Korea. Among ten bureau directors and four office chiefs, eleven positions were occupied by members of the NKCP. The remaining three were also communists, but held membership in other parties. The establishment of the NKPPC, together with the consolidation of the NKCP, indicated that the groundwork for building a party, and a government in North Korea was settled.¹¹

In the Soviet scheme of indirect rule of North Korea a crucial thing was to choose the chief Korean agent 'thoroughly loyal to the Soviet Union.' Kim IlSung was thought to be fit for this role. As to why, when and how Kim IlSung was chosen by the Soviet authorities as their chief agent in North Korea, definite evidence has yet to be found. However, it is possible to draw some kind of inferences on these questions from available materials. So far, the most plausible one among these inferences is that Stalin who had the final word on this matter preferred a young Kim IlSung who had served in the Soviet Army for several years to 'old' Korean communist leaders who had mostly been involved in bitter factional strife during the two decades before 1945. Kim IlSung's position as the chief Soviet agent was apparently settled in mid-October 1945. On 10 October Kim IlSung was nominated as the chief organiser of the North Korean Branch Bureau of the KCP. On 14 October, at a large-scale people's rally held in P'yongyang, Kim IlSung was introduced by Major-General Lebjedjeev as

the hero who had led the anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean people. From this time on the status of Kim IlSung as the chief Korean agent of the Soviet authorities was established.¹² (So it would be rather appropriate to call the Partisan group the Kim IlSung group from that time on.)

Setting up Security Forces

From early September 1945, the Soviet occupation authorities set about organising an internal security system. After Japan surrendered many local vigilance groups emerged in north Korea. Since the Japanese police was demoralised these vigilance groups maintained law and order in the localities until the Soviet forces arrived. Aware of the importance of police power in such a fluid situation, many Korean communists participated in these vigilance groups. The Soviet occupation authorities did not challenge the activities of these vigilance groups for some weeks. Instead, they helped the Korean communists to gain control of the vigilance groups. In early September 1945, separate from these voluntary vigilance groups, the Soviet occupation authorities organised Red Guards on a provincial level. Merging police and militia functions, the Red Guards performed a transitional role before a systematic police system was activated in late October 1945.¹³

On 12 October 1945, Colonel-General Chistiakov ordered that all armed organisations in North Korea, including the Red Guards, should be dissolved and their weapons, ammunition and other military supplies should be surrendered to the Soviet occupation authorities. By this order all peace-preservation and quasi-military organisations which had existed since late August 1945 were disbanded by late October 1945. The Red Guards were disbanded on 21 October. Instead, the Soviet authorities ordered people's committees to organise police forces under their control. From early November 1945, each provincial people's committee began to organise a Department of Security. At county level, police stations were organised.¹⁴

A Security Bureau having central authority over all police forces in North Korea was organised on 19 November 1945. The Security Bureau evolved from a conference on 15 November, chaired by Ch'oe Yong-gon, for the unification of police forces in North Korea. With the inauguration of the North Korean Administration Ch'oe Yong-gon was appointed Director of the Security Bureau. Many members of the Kim IlSung group and Soviet-Koreans were made provincial or county heads of the police forces. During the first four months of Soviet occupation, August-December 1945, there was a tendency, in the formation of the government and the party, to allow a certain degree of heterogeneity. It was partly due to the need to make those apparatuses seem to be an all-embracing united front, and partly due to the shortage of manpower. However, as regards security organs, the grip of the Soviet authorities through the most faithful Korean protégé was such as to be unquestioned.¹⁵

The internal security system of North Korea was predominantly patterned after the Soviet model. The Security Bureau headed by Ch'oe Yong-gon was a sort of Ministry of the Interior and approximated to the NKVD of the Soviet Union. In addition to the regular police functions, the Security Bureau was also in charge of border and railway security troops, fire brigades, the prison, and other residuary functions which had not been allotted to other bureaus exclusively. Moreover, the political police was also incorporated into the Security Bureau though it maintained much more autonomy than other departments. The central headquarters and its local system, of the Security Bureau, underwent many organisational changes in the first half of 1946. By July 1946 it could manage to set up a uniformed organisation.¹⁶

As of 1 July 1946, the outline of the organisation and functions of the Security Bureau was as follows. There were four divisions in the Security Bureau, respectively in charge of general administration, civil policing, security forces, and criminal investigation. The General Administration Division consisted of three sections - the

personnel, finance, and general service sections. The Civil Police Division was in charge of peace preservation, statistics, and fire brigade. The Constabulary Division was in charge of security forces - the police constabulary, the railway constabulary and the coast guard. The Criminal Investigation Division consisted of three sections - criminal investigation, intelligence, and the prison sections. Among them the Constabulary Division was a sort of the headquarters of the security forces under the control of the Security Bureau.¹⁷

From early November 1945, each provincial people's committee began to organise a security force of battalion size under the control of the Provincial Department of Security. At county level security units of various sizes, not bigger than a company, were organised under the control of the police chief of each county. The leadership of these security forces was mostly from the reliable elements among the Red Guards. The mission of the security forces was mainly to guard key governmental or industrial positions. The total strength of the security forces was estimated to be around 10,000 men in July 1946. Apart from ordinary security forces, a Railway Constabulary was organised on 12 January 1946, under the direct command of the Security Bureau. It was to perform guard duty along the railways, tunnels, and railway stations, reflecting the great concerns of the Soviet authorities in the railway system. The Railway Constabulary amounted to the strength of thirteen companies over all North Korea in July 1946. A Coast Guard was first organised in Chinampo in March 1946. By July 1946, the Coast Guard expanded to two battalions stationed along the east and west coasts.¹⁸

The security forces under the Security Bureau (later the Interior Bureau or the Ministry of the Interior) were to contribute to the steady development of the KPA. The effectiveness and readiness of the security forces in meeting internal security missions discharged the KPA from annoying politico-military activities such as policing mass upheavals or wearying, punitive operations against anti-communist provocations. Even in the border conflicts along the 38th parallel which intensified from early 1949 and lasted until just before the

outbreak of the Korean War, the security forces were put in, instead of troops of the KPA. The brigades of the security forces which had fought border conflicts in this period were to be turned over to the Ministry of National Defence in early July 1950 to meet the need of rapid expansion of the KPA. Thus, the security forces were closely related to the development of the KPA.

There is an argument that the organisation of the security forces in the provinces and counties from early November 1945 was the beginning of the KPA. This is not the case. In communist countries, there is a clear distinction between, the security force under the Ministry of the Interior, and the defence force under the Ministry of Defence, in terms of mission, organisation, equipment and training. To quote Kim IlSung's remarks, the security force is 'one that will always defend the country, our state power and the people's interest against encroachment by internal and external enemies of all hues.'¹⁹ On the other hand the defence force is 'an army which will play the leading role in the event of war to defend the country against the armed invasion by foreign aggressors.'²⁰ In organising the security and defence force of North Korea, the Soviet authorities and their North Korean protégés made this distinction clear.

The P'yongyang Institute

The genuine beginning of the Korean People's Army was the establishment of a P'yongyang Institute, a politico-military academy, in P'yongyang in November 1945. The P'yongyang Institute was the first military and political academy in North Korea, preceding many schools and cadre-training institutions for various fields. The aim of the institute was to train quickly 'military and political cadres who will constitute the backbone of modern regular armed forces.'²¹ The P'yongyang Institute was again to be the parent-body of military schools for various services and arms which were to emerge in the future. So the founding of the P'yongyang Institute was the first step in organising a Korean People's Army.²²

The P'yongyang Institute was predominantly staffed by members of the Kim IlSung group. The institute was headed by Kim Ch'aek, a senior figure of the Kim IlSung group. Altogether about thirty men from the Kim IlSung group constituted the faculty of the institution. Judging from a directive by Kim IlSung on 19 November 1945 at the designation of a site for the institute, Kim IlSung group's involvement in the making of the P'yongyang Institute was from the first very much apparent and weighty. As of late 1945, most members of the Kim IlSung group were not well suited to occupy responsible positions in the government and the party; though, in the making of an army, they were in a position to claim a dominant role. They had abundant experiences of armed struggle from the 1930s, which other Korean communists, save the Yen'an group, were lacking. And the Yen'an group was not welcomed by the Soviet occupation authorities. So the hegemony of the P'yongyang Institute was naturally to be placed in the hands of the Kim IlSung group from the first.²³

The P'yongyang Institute was officially opened on 23 February 1946. The first class of the institute had entered the institute on 3 January 1946 and had received training to prepare for the official opening ceremony. Kim IlSung delivered a key-note speech at the opening ceremony. In his speech Kim IlSung made it clear that the 'P'yongyang Institute is the beginning of the regular army to be built in the future.'²⁴ Having defined the aim and character of the institute clearly, Kim IlSung then referred to tasks incumbent upon the students. First of all, Kim IlSung emphasised that 'the students make themselves fighters who faithfully serve the people since they would become cadres of a People's Army in the future'.²⁵ Kim IlSung referred to the experiences of the anti-Japanese armed struggles in the 1930s as a good example of a people's army who had received the active support of the people. Following the example of the anti-Japanese fighters, Kim IlSung stressed, soldiers in the people's army 'should have high regard for the interests of the people and strive to protect their lives and property no matter when and where and should under no circumstances isolate themselves from the people

but should learn from the masses with an open mind'.²⁶ Thus, close links with the people was emphasised as the most important ideological doctrine of the People's Army.

Kim IlSung proposed as the philosophy underlying the education in the institute the combination of theory and practice. A combination of political education and military training was also stressed by Kim IlSung. He said that 'Military matters separated from politics and politics separated from military matters are of no use, they are bound inseparably.'²⁷ For political study it was emphasised to be equipped with the 'revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the indomitable spirit of fighting resolutely to liquidate the survivals of Japanese imperialism and feudalism and to build a new country'.²⁸ In military training, Kim IlSung stressed the following: first, physical strength; second, marksmanship; and third, knowledge of tactics. Kim IlSung's conception of military discipline in the revolutionary army was to stress 'rigid yet voluntary military discipline under which everyone will observe set discipline without question and abide by it willingly'.²⁹ Kim IlSung's speech at the opening ceremony of the P'yongyang Institute on 23 February 1946 was the embodiment of Kim IlSung's military thoughts and was to be one of the central themes of the ideological doctrine of the KPA ever since.

The curricula and duration of the education of the P'yongyang Institute underwent many changes. The first class graduated in April 1946. The second class finished in August 1946. The first two classes received less than six months' education, reflecting the urgent need for preparing for basic units and schools of the Security Cadres Training Corps which was being organised during this period. From the third class which began in August 1946 the emphasis of the education shifted from politico-military training to mainly political training since a Central Security Officers School for producing officers for the infantry, artillery, engineers and other arms of regular army was also operative from July 1946. The Central Security Officers School was founded in Kangso-gun, near P'yongyang on 20 July 1946, with Pak Hyo-sam, a Yenian returnee, as its head. Pak Hyo-sam's

appointment to head of the school was a step to make use of the experiences of the Yen-an group in the development of the people's army. With the founding of the Central Security Officers school which was to produce the commanding officers of the people's army, the P'yongyang Institute was gradually transformed into a school for producing the political officers of the people's army.³⁰

The Security Cadres Training Corps

In June 1946, a Security Cadres Training Centre was established in Kaech'on, South P'yongan Province. By August 1946, altogether three training centres of this kind were organised, the second in Nanam, North Hamkyong Province and the third in P'yongyang. The bulk of the cadres of the training centres were old members of the KVA who entered North Korea in the late spring of 1946 to be utilised for the future people's army. The training centres were in fact the parent body of the divisions of the KPA. Each training camp had three sub-camps, which were to be transformed into infantry regiments in the newly formed divisions.³¹

On 15 August 1946, a Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters was organised in P'yongyang. The Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters was a General Headquarters for all the military schools and training centres which had been developing since November 1945. The P'yongyang Institute, the Central Security Officers School, and three Security Cadres Training Centres, together with a security unit and a medical unit, were placed under the command of the training corps headquarters. The establishment of the Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters was a concluding step in the preparation of the groundwork of the future KPA.³²

The organisation of the training corps headquarters was, though rudimentary, patterned after the typical headquarters organisation of the ground force in communist countries. It consisted of the General Staff, the Cultural Department (a Political Department), the Rear

Services Department and the Artillery Department. Ch'oe Yong-gon, Director of the Security Bureau since late 1945, was named Commander-in-Chief of the training corps. An Kil, a senior figure of the Kim IlSung group, was appointed Chief of the General Staff. An Kil was also named Head of the P'yongyang Institute. Kim Il, a faithful crony of Kim IlSung, was appointed Chief of the Cultural Department. Choe Hong-guk, a Soviet Korean, was made Chief of the Rear Services Department. Mu Chong, the leader of the Yen-an group and one of the organisers of artillery troops of the Chinese Communist Forces, was appointed Chief of the Artillery Department. A Soviet Major-General named Smirnov was seconded to the training corps headquarters as chief of the Soviet military advisers.³³

The Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters was a General Headquarters rather than a Ministry of Defence. Its main function was to organise and train cadre members of the future KPA. Such affairs for a Ministry of Defence as formulating defence policy, administering the military establishment, building a defence industry or allotting resources was not yet the major responsibility of the training corps headquarters as of 1946. The Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters was not represented in the organisational chart of the North Korean Provisional People's Committee, then government of North Korea.³⁴ (This unique status of the armed forces in North Korea is not an extraordinary case. From April 1982, the Department of the Armed Forces was excluded from the Administration Council - the North Korean Cabinet - and was placed under the direct control of the Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea.)

The dominant position of the Kim IlSung group in the Security Cadres Training Corps was well represented in the structure of the high command. The three most important jobs - Commander-in-Chief, Chief of the General Staff, and Chief of the Cultural Department, all went to the Kim IlSung group. The three key figures of the Security Officers Training Corps Headquarters came to constitute the inner core of a defence council of the North Korean regime, together with Kim IlSung as supreme commander and Kim Ch'aek as Kim IlSung's deputy in

charge of overall defence policy. Ch'oe Yong-gon was to be rather a symbolic head of the people's army. His reputation in the NEAJUA in the 1930s was highly regarded in these years. So he was in a good position to demand respect and obedience from not only members of the Kim IlSung group but those from the Yen'an group and the Soviet-Korean group. An Kil, Chief of the General Staff, was to perform the day-to-day business of the General Headquarters. He was chief liaison officer between the training corps headquarters and the Soviet military advisers. Kim Il was to perform the role of high priest in the people's army, the chief advocate of the revolutionary and nationalistic tradition of the anti-Japanese guerrillas in the 1930s.³⁵

Mu Chong's appointment to Chief of Artillery was another step to utilise the experiences and manpower of the Yen'an group. A month before Mu Chong's appointment, Pak Hyo-sam, former Vice Commander of the Korean Volunteer Corps, had been appointed Head of the Central Security Officers School. However, Mu Chong's position as Chief of Artillery was not a proper one considering his high reputation among the Yen'an group. In December 1945, he had been elected Second Secretary of the North Korean Communist Party, (strictly speaking, the North Korean Branch Bureau of the Korean Communist Party). As Chief of Artillery and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Security Cadres Training Corps, Mu Chong ranked only twelfth in the hierarchy of the party. (As of August 1946, the North Korean Workers' Party.) So as of late 1946, Mu Chong was no more a national figure. Mu Chong's role and position in the North Korea regime well epitomised the status of the Yen'an group in Soviet occupied North Korea.

By August 1946 the Soviet authorities and their Korean protégés had laid the groundwork for organising the people's army of North Korea. In the preparation of the groundwork of the people's army, the following policies were stressed. First, to build the cadres of the army first and not to improvise fighting units hastily; secondly, to make up the leadership of the army with members of the Kim IlSung group. To build the cadres first is an orthodox way of building an

army. Since the Soviet forces were stationed in North Korea in this period, a people's army of North Korea could enjoy the advantage of not being compelled to undertake impending defence missions. The security forces under the Security Bureau freed the people's army of internal security missions. Owing to these two factors, builders of the people's army could take a gradual, developmental approach in laying the groundwork of the future people's army. To form the nucleus of the people's army with members of the Kim IlSung group was all too natural for the Soviet authorities and its chief agent in North Korea - Kim IlSung. Not only the Kim IlSung group secured the important positions of the embryonic people's army but also they were endeavouring to indoctrinate the people's army with the spirit and tradition of their anti-Japanese struggle so as to make the people's army their faithful bastion.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KPA; 1946.8-1948.12

During August 1946 to December 1948, the People's Army of North Korea was established as a modern regular army with all formalities and substantial strength. In formal terms, the official founding of the Korean People's Army on 8 February 1948 was an epochal point in the history of the KPA. But in terms of the size of the forces involved, the official announcement on 26 September 1948 of the complete withdrawal of the Soviet forces in North Korea was a landmark in the development of the People's Army. During this period the division of Korea into two bitterly antagonistic camps became a reality with the advent of two separate governments in north and south Korea by September 1948. In spite of the rapidly changing international and domestic situations the development of the People's Army itself was steady and methodical largely owing to the presence of Soviet forces in North Korea and the effectiveness of the security forces.

Political Setting

Entering 1947, the prospects for a solution to the Korean issue were worsening. The second session of the US-USSR Joint Commission which was held from May 1947 became almost deadlocked by September 1947, without any viable advance. The time was already that of the Cold War, well manifested in the Truman Doctrine of March 1947. So, by this time, it became evident that any viable solution between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Korean issue along the lines of the Moscow agreement of December 1945 was hardly to effect. The failure of the US-USSR Joint Commission was 'symbolic of mutual

suspicion and acrimony between the Russians and the Americans exacerbated by the consuming tensions of Korean politics.¹

By mid-September 1947, US security planners reached a decision to bring the Korean issue to the United Nations. An accepted view by many western scholars on that US decision is to emphasise the discrepancy between US political objectives regarding Korea and its military and economic resources to meet the objectives. The US commitment to Korea was, at the time of late 1947, considered by US security planners to be an untenable burden in the context of global US strategic priorities. Notwithstanding, the Americans could not leave Korea without considerable loss of prestige and political standing at large, and particularly in the Far East, in case the United States relinquished its commitment to South Korea overnight. An alternative line of action was to bring forward the Korean issue to the United Nations where the United States effectively dominated at that time.²

The Soviet government, understandably, did not view favourably the US proposal of bringing the Korean issue to the United Nations. The Soviet government and the North Korean regime regarded the laying of the Korean issue before the United Nations as 'a grave act of provocation betraying the Moscow agreement of December 1945'³ and 'violating Paragraph 7, article 2 of the UN Charter which prohibits the United Nations intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.'⁴ In late September 1947, the Soviet government counteracted the US proposal by proposing to withdraw all foreign troops from Korea simultaneously by the beginning of 1948 'to afford the Koreans an opportunity to form a government by themselves without the aid and participation of the Allies.'⁵ Here, the Soviet position of insisting on the Koreanisation of the Korea issue was well contrasted with the US position of seeking for a diplomatic solution of the Korean issue.

The US government contended that the withdrawal of foreign troops must be subsequent to the establishment of a Korean government. And

it proposed a United Nations commission, whose function would be to observe elections to be held by the occupying powers in their respective zones, and to advise Korean representatives so elected on the establishment of a national government; and to advise the national government in making these arrangements necessary for Korean independence.⁶ It is open to controversy to establish whether the US government genuinely believed that such a United Nations Commission could succeed in the place where two major components of the United Nations - the United States and the Soviet Union - had already failed to settle the dispute. A United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) was set up on 14 November 1947 based on this US proposal.⁷

The Soviet government who opposed even bringing the Korean issue to the United Nations repudiated the UNTCOK severely. The North Korea regime denounced the setting up of the UNTCOK as a conspiracy to perpetuate the division of Korea. Along with the arrival of the UNTCOK in Seoul in early January 1948, vigorous demonstrations and mass rallies opposing the UNTCOK were organised both in north and south Korea. In south Korea the South Korean Workers' Party (SKWP) was the main instrument in these protests and denunciations against the UNTCOK. Opposition to the UNTCOK culminated in the so-called 2.7 National Salvation Struggle of February 1947. Throughout the spring of 1948, the North Korean regime continued efforts to sabotage the UNTCOK.⁸

In April 1948, Kim IlSung called for a joint conference of political parties and social organisations of north and south Korea. Kim IlSung proposed to discuss necessary measures 'to save the nation by achieving national unity and solidarity and frustrating the "UNTCOK" plot to split the country permanently,'⁹ and to 'achieve the historic cause of establishing a democratic unified government.'¹⁰ For the North Korean regime the South-North Political Consultation Conference of late April 1948 was a great propaganda success. From south Korea not only left-wingers but such prominent nationalist leaders as Kim Ku (formerly President of the exile Korean Provisional Government) attended the conference. A joint communique of the

conference on 30 April 1948 endorsed North Korea's opposition to general elections in the south. It also called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops and proposed to hold an all-Korean political conference to form a provisional government. The timing of the conference was well calculated to torpedo the May 10 election which was to be held in south Korea under the observation of the UNTCOK.¹¹

After the May 10 election in south Korea ended in success, the North Korean regime moved quickly towards establishing its own government. In fact, it had been preparing 'a Constitution of a Democratic People's Republic of Korea' since November 1947. On 29 June 1948 'a council of leaders of the political parties and social organisations in north and south Korea' unanimously approved Kim IlSung's proposal 'on the founding of a democratic people's republic.' The general election to form 'the supreme legislative organ of all Korea' was held on 25 August 1948 'in different ways in north and south Korea.' In North Korea, it was reported that 99.97 per cent of all eligible voters took part in the election. It was claimed that the people of south Korea participated in the election through 'secret balloting'. Altogether 572 Deputies of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) were 'elected'. The first session of the SPA was held on 2 September 1948. On 9 September the SPA declared the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and 'organised the Government of the DPRK as the supreme executive organ of power' with Kim IlSung as its head.¹² The DPRK claimed to have jurisdiction over the whole of Korea de jure, calling south Korea the 'southern half of the republic'. (Based on this justification the North Korean regime came to claim that the Korean War was a civil conflict and denounced the UN intervention as a violation of the UN Charter.)

The first DPRK Cabinet organised on 9 September 1948 was a federation of leaders of various origins. The cabinet consisted of the following portfolios: Premier; three Deputy Premiers; Chairman of the National Planning Commission; and Ministers for foreign affairs, defence, audit and inspection, internal affairs, industry, agriculture, commerce, transportation, finance, education,

communication, justice, culture and propaganda, employment, and health; and one Minister without Portfolio. Under Kim IlSung the following three men were appointed Deputy Premiers: Pak Hon-yong, leader of the South Korea Workers' Party; Hong Myong-hui, a moderate left wing intellectual; and Kim Ch'aek, a chief of staff of the Kim IlSung group. Among the members of the cabinet, only three men were from the Kim IlSung group, including Kim IlSung himself, the two others being Kim Ch'aek and Ch'oe Yong-gon, Defence Minister. Four members of the cabinet were from the South Korean Workers' Party. Chong ch'un-taek, a Soviet-Korean, was appointed Chairman of the National Planning Commission, a GOSPLAN. Other Ministerial posts were evenly distributed to the Yen'an group, domestic communists and moderate left-wingers.¹³

Along with the founding of the DPRK, a unified system of leadership for the Workers' Parties in north and south Korea was also organised. Until August 1948 the South Korean Workers' Party maintained its own identity, although its leadership was depending on north Korean communists since late 1946. (Pak Hon-yong and his immediate followers defected from south Korea into north Korea in September 1946 to escape arrest by the US military government authorities.) Ever since, the south Korean communist leadership had been engaged in directing south Korean communists from their headquarters in Haeju, just north of the 38th parallel. It was mainly these south Korean communists who were to represent the south Korean people at the Supreme People's Assembly in September 1948. With the founding of the ROK government in south Korea in August 1948, the south Korean communists remaining in the south were faced with near total destruction and their leadership in the north was more isolated and weaker. The merger of the North and South Korean Workers' Parties in late August 1948 in the form of organising a Joint Central Committee of the North and South Korean Workers' Parties was in fact the absorption of the south Korean communists into the North Korean Workers' Party. (The complete merger of the North and South Korean Workers' Parties into the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) was made in June 1949.)¹⁴

Growth of the People's Army

Until October 1946, the Security Cadres Training Centres were mainly engaged in doing preparatory works such as organising and training cadres and building accommodation and facilities for incoming recruits. From mid-November 1946, recruits from all over North Korea were pouring into the training centres. In this period, there was no nation-wide conscription. Recruits at this stage were acquired through the following methods: (1) enlisting party members; (2) attracting such personnel who had military experiences in the Japanese army (mostly, as soldiers), the Korean Volunteer Army, or the Chinese Communist Forces; (3) transferring the recruits who had volunteered for the police force to the training centres; and (4) persuading and enticing local youths by local party and governmental officials.¹⁵

From early December 1946, the training centres began to receive Soviet arms and equipment. By that time, the people's army and the security forces were mainly equipped with confiscated Japanese weaponry. At first departing Soviet troops turned over their arms to the Korean troops. In January 1947, agreements were made regarding the payment for the Soviet arms. The NKPPC was to pay for the Soviet arms with foodstuffs. Thus, the Soviet arms were not free of charge. (The same was true for the large bulk of Soviet arms shipments received in the spring of 1950 in preparing for the Korean War.) By April 1947, there were few troops that lacked Soviet armament. Save heavy armoury such as self-propelled artillery guns and tanks, the training centres were equipped with Soviet arms at the standard of Soviet light infantry divisions.¹⁶

By mid-May 1947, the Security Officers Training Centres were transformed into (light) infantry divisions. The 1st Training Centre at Kae Ch'on with sub-camps at Sinuiju, Choeryong and Kanggye was designated the 1st Infantry Division. The 2nd Training Centre at Nanam with sub-camps at Hoeryong, P'yongch'on, and Kangtok became the

2nd Infantry Division. The 3rd Training Centre at P'yongyang area was reorganised into the 3rd Independent Mixed Brigade. Each division had around 10,400 men and consisted of the following units: three infantry regiments of 2,700 men each, an artillery regiment, a training battalion, a reconnaissance battalion, an anti-tank battalion, an engineers battalion, a signals battalion and divisional troops for administration and rear services. The division headquarters was patterned after the General Headquarters (The Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters), consisting of a General Staff, a Cultural Department, a Rear Services Department and an Artillery Department. A Political Defence Department, a secret police system, was also detached to the division. The 3rd Independent Mixed Brigade had three infantry battalions and an artillery battalion plus service and combat support troops, totalling about 3,400 men.¹⁷

The General Headquarters of the people's army was also expanding. The General Staff consisted of operations, reconnaissance, personnel, communications and engineers sections. The Rear Services Department consisted of ordnance, veterinary, housing, medical, transportation, clothing, food, administration, intendance, finance and planning sections. In addition, the Cultural Department, the Artillery Training Department, the Military Prosecutor's Department and the Military Tribunal Department formed the General Headquarters. Under its direct control, the GHQ had a Central Guard Regiment of 1,200 men and a Central Hospital. The P'yongyang Institute and the Central Security Officers School were also under the control of the GHQ. In all, as of May 1947, the people's army had a total strength of approximately 30,000 men.¹⁸

In May 1947, a rank system in the people's army was introduced. Since the establishment of the people's army was not yet proclaimed officially, a temporary system was introduced. For example a Major Kim was recorded on paper as Medium Star One Kim or Rank Seven Kim. However, colloquially, he was still called simply Comrade Kim. A Major Kim wore a uniform with a medium star on his shoulder. Details of the system were as follows:

General	Extra Large Star One	Rank Thirteen
Lt. General	Large Star Two	Rank Twelve
Maj. General	Large Star One	Rank Eleven
Senior Col.	Medium Star Four	Rank Ten
Colonel	Medium Star Three	Rank Nine
Lt. Colonel	Medium Star Two	Rank Eight
Major	Medium Star One	Rank Seven
Captain	Small Star Four	Rank Six
Senior Lt.	Small Star Three	Rank Five
Lieutenant	Small Star Two	Rank Four
Junior Lt.	Small Star One	Rank Three

Ch'oe Yong-gon, Commander-in-Chief of the people's army was ranked General and wore Extra Large Star One, but was called simply Comrade Ch'oe Yong-gon. On the payroll he was recorded as Rank Thirteen Ch'oe Yong-gon. The 'Rank' system was also used over the whole government structure. Ministers were given Rank Thirteen. Deputy Ministers were given Rank Twelve. In the people's army, three men were given Rank Twelve - An Kil, Chief of the General Staff; Kim Il, Chief of the Cultural Department; and Mu Chong, Chief of the Artillery Training Department. Divisional Commanders were ranked as Senior Colonels at first but soon promoted to Major-Generals.¹⁹

Since the people's army was expanding rapidly in late 1946 and manpower and experiences of the Kim IlSung group was not enough to meet this expansion, more Yen'an Koreans with military records were incorporated into the people's army. However, the set-up of the General Headquarters was not much affected by this new development. Those Yen'an Koreans were mostly deployed below divisional commander level. Major-General Kim Ung, formerly Commander of the 1st Branch Corps of the Korean Volunteer Army, was appointed one of two divisional commanders of the people's army, commanding the 1st Infantry Division. Meanwhile, Kang Gon, a senior figure in the Kim IlSung group, was appointed Commander of the 2nd Infantry Division. Kim Kwang-hyop, a senior figure in the Kim IlSung group, was appointed Commander of the 3rd Independent Mixed Brigade. Under Kim Ung, Ch'oe Kwang, a junior figure in the Kim IlSung group, was placed as Chief of Staff, while Yi Ik-song, formerly Commander of the 5th Branch Corps of the Korean Volunteer Army, was made Chief of Staff to Kang Gon. Two

of regimental commanders in the 1st Infantry Division were from the Yen-an group while all three regimental commanders of the 2nd Infantry Division were from the Kim IlSung group. Thus, the Kim IlSung group and the Yen-an group was living a kind of cohabitation during this period.²⁰

The Soviet-Koreans were mainly deployed in technical services, military schools, and the secret police. For instance, Kim Pa, a Soviet-Korean, was in charge of the Political Defence Department of the people's army. The Political Defence Department was in fact a branch of the Soviet secret police. It was independent of the Cultural Department (a Political Department) and was functioning as a SMERSH (the Soviet Counter-Intelligence Corps) organisation over the people's army. Kim Pa was once called the most-feared man in North Korea. Ki Sok-bok, a former Major in the Soviet Army, was appointed Head of the P'yongyang Institute, succeeding An Kil. Kim Bong-yul, a Lieutenant in the Soviet Army, was appointed Deputy Chief of the Artillery Training Department. Pak Kil-nam, a Captain in the Soviet Army, was made Chief of the Engineers Department. Ch'oe Hong-guk was serving as Chief of the Rear Services Department, one of three main departments of the GHQ.²¹

In the building of the people's army, the authority and influence of the Soviet military advisers was enormous. The Soviet advisers were instrumental in the formation of the Security Cadres Training Centres in the summer of 1946. After the Security Cadres Training Corps was founded in August 1946, their activities became more organised. The number of Soviet advisers per Korean unit was varied from time to time. At the end of 1947 there were about 150 Soviet officers assigned to a division. At the General Headquarters, Major-General Smirnov was chief military adviser. He was to continue the job until April 1950. A Soviet Colonel assisted each divisional commander of the people's army. Soviet advisers were seldom assigned below battalion level except in special cases such as independent companies or technical troops. Together with the Soviet-Koreans assigned to the people's army, the Soviet military advisers were

substantially functioning as staff officers and instructors of the people's army in this period.²²

With the development of the people's army under the support and direction of Soviet military advisers more emphasis was laid in the ideological orientation of the people's army on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in addition to the revolutionary and nationalistic tradition of the anti-Japanese armed struggle. A symbolic manifestation of this new trend was the fact that under Kim Il, Chief of the Cultural Department, another Kim Il, a Soviet Korean from Tashkent, was made deputy to the senior Kim Il. A distinction is easily found between the two Kim Ils' emphasis on ideological orientation of the people's army in this period.²³

The writings of senior Kim Il were plain in logic and style and had almost the same contents as Kim IlSung's. The main clauses were the following: (1) the people's army is the successor of the anti-Japanese Korean People's Revolutionary Army; (2) the people's army should be the genuine defender of the people, serving the people, living with the people, and learning from the people; and (3) the discipline of the people's army should be that of a revolutionary, self-conscious discipline, not that of a bourgeoisie, blind discipline. The writings of junior Kim Il were much more complicated and sophisticated in its logic and expression than the senior Kim Il's. He emphasised the following: (1) the liberation of Korea from the yoke of the Japanese colonial rule was absolutely indebted to the Soviet Union; (2) the people's army should be faithful to proletarian internationalism and should serve the interest of fraternal countries as well as the interests of the Korean people; and (3) the people's army should be eager to learn the advanced military science of the Soviet Union and should develop into a modern, regular army.²⁴

The political education and training in the people's army was based on a combination of these two lines. Soldiers of the people's army were taught 'History of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle', together with 'History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union'.

They read 'Biography of Stalin' as well as 'Biography of General Kim IlSung'. Especially political education curricula for senior officers was almost a duplication of the curricula for Soviet officers. Since there were not many even among senior officers of the people's army who could well understand the esoteric philosophy and social sciences of Marxism-Leninism, the value of such stereotypical indoctrination was doubtful. In terms of effect, the simple and emotional message of senior Kim Il seemed to be much more effective to the soldiers of the people's army.²⁵

Strengthening the Security Forces

Along with the growth of the people's army the security forces were also steadily expanding in this period. In February 1947, with the inauguration of the North Korean People's Committee (NKPC), the Security Bureau was renamed the Interior Bureau. Pak Il-u remained as Director of the Interior Bureau. The Interior Bureau had three divisions and eight offices under its control. The three divisions of the Interior Bureau were the main working body of the bureau. Amongst them the Constabulary Division was responsible for all sorts of security forces: the Police Constabulary, the Railway Constabulary, the Border Constabulary, and the Coast Guard.²⁶

The Police Constabulary was the group seen most often in North Korea at the time. It was charged with assisting provincial and local police, functioning as a sort of mobile police force. These provincial and local police at that time were a staff organisation rather than an operating agency, with a small forces - about forty men at county level and less than one hundred men at provincial headquarters level. Detachments of the Police Constabulary were often used in maintaining order in railway stations and their immediate vicinity, which was mainly the job of the Railway Constabulary. Except for South P'yongan Province, in which the seat of the North Korean regime was located, a police constabulary of battalion-size of

about 1,000 men was deployed in each province. In South P'yongan Province three battalions of police constabulary were deployed.²⁷

As of early 1947, the Railway Constabulary was, in addition to its normal guard duties on railway lines, also functioning as a reserve force for the people's army. This unique function of the Railway Constabulary had already been exhibited when the Railway Constabulary Command was transformed in June 1946 into the 3rd Security Cadres Training Centre, the parent body of the 3rd Independent Mixed Brigade. The Railway Constabulary battalions were deployed in such important areas as P'yongyang, Sariwon, Wonsan, and Chongjin. (These Railway Constabulary battalions were to form the 4th Independent Mixed Brigade in October 1948, the parent body of the 4th Infantry Division.)²⁸

From July 1947 the Border Constabulary battalions were deployed along the 38th parallel. There were two battalions of this kind. The 7th Battalion, with a strength of 1,200 men was deployed in Kyongki Province area and the 9th Battalion of the same size was deployed in Kangwon Province area. These two battalions were under the direct command of the Director of the Interior Bureau, and maintained close liaison relations with the provincial Interior Departments and the Soviet forces deployed along the 38th parallel. For security reasons, a five kilometre-width area along the 38th parallel was practically blocked to ordinary north Koreans. The Border Constabulary battalions were responsible for the security of this area. These battalions were to develop into Security Brigades in late 1948. (It was these 38 Security Brigades which became engaged in border conflicts with the troops of the ROK Army from early 1949.)²⁹

The Coast Guard consisted of three regional coast guards. The 1st Coast Guard based in Wonsan and the 2nd Coast Guard based in Chongjin guarded the east coast of north Korea and the 3rd Coast Guard based in Chinnampo was in charge of the security of the west coast. In June 1947, a Coast Guard Cadres School was founded in Wonsan with Kim Kwang-yon, a Soviet-Korean, as its head. Each regional coast guard consisted of several detachments of about fifty personnel each. These

detachments guarded the coast against smugglers and possible espionage infiltration from the south. They were also in charge of apprehending refugees who attempted to escape from the north. The Coast Guard was equipped with vintage motor boats which the Japanese left behind in 1945. This meagre supply to the Coast Guard of personnel and equipment was to remain almost unchanged for a couple of years. So the Coast Guard was, despite that it was the parent body of the North Korean Navy, remained literally a 'rudimentary' coast guard for some years.³⁰

In February 1948, an Independent Security Brigade was organised in Chinnampo. This brigade was the first of its kind whose main function was to support the regular army in combat-orientated activities rather than internal security activities. The main function of the Independent Security Brigade was to assist the regular army by making sure that 'the people's army has sufficient time to move to the front and that the entire people rally to the front, so that the people's army is in a position to win battles.'³¹ So, while the people's army was concentrating on education and training, the Security Brigades should be at alert at all times. The Independent Security Brigade was the nucleus around which other armed forces of the Interior Bureau (the Ministry of the Interior from September 1948) would grow in strength in the future.³²

In August 1948 the 3rd Security Brigade was organised to further strengthen the security of the 38th parallel. Up to that time two Border Constabulary battalions, the 7th in Kyongki Province and the 9th in Kangwon Province, had guarded the 38th parallel. Two more battalions were deployed along the 38th parallel with the activation of the 3rd Security Brigade. The mission of the 3rd Security Brigade was, with these four battalions, to defend the border area against possible infringements from the south, and to tighten control over north Koreans who attempted to cross the 38th parallel into the south. The 3rd Security Brigade was, like the Independent Security Brigade, expected 'to train a large number of officers for itself and keep them in reserve so as to supplement the officers in time when the units are

expanded or new units [are] formed.'³³ (The 3rd Security Brigade was transformed into the 9th Infantry Division of the KPA in July 1950.)

By the time the Interior Bureau was transformed into the Ministry of the Interior in September 1948, the Security forces comprising the Police Constabulary, the Railway Constabulary, the Security Brigades, and the Coast Guard, amounted to about 40,000 men. These security forces were estimated to be sufficiently effective to maintain the internal security of North Korea. Furthermore through the defence of the 38th parallel, in which tension was increasingly growing between the north and south from late 1947, security forces under the Interior Bureau were effectively gaining valuable time for the steady development of the people's army in this period.³⁴

The Founding of the Korean People's Army

On 8 February 1948 the founding of a Korean People's Army was officially proclaimed. At the ceremony held in P'yongyang Kim IlSung declared that 'the Korean people, who had been subjected to all manner of persecution and suppression under the bayonets of the Japanese imperialists came to have their own fully-fledged regular army to defend the country and the nation'.³⁵ He pointed out the significance of having one's own army as follows:

No independent state is without its own army. Naturally no state can attain complete independence without its army. Our people was occupied by the Japanese imperialists because our people at that time had no army of their own strong enough to defeat the Japanese imperialist aggressor.³⁶

Having stressed the significance of the founding of the KPA, Kim IlSung remarked on the reasons why the founding of the KPA needed to be officially proclaimed at that stage. He insisted that the founding of the people's army would give mighty encouragement to the people in

south Korea 'in their struggle for the reunification and independence of the country along democratic lines'.³⁷ He emphasised that the founding of the KPA was necessary 'to prevent US imperialism and the reactionaries in south Korea from starting a civil war'³⁸ and 'to prevent any reactionary forces and subversive elements from spoiling in the slightest degree all the precious results gained by the north Korean people.'³⁹ Here Kim IlSung was already implying a possibility of a civil war between north and south Korea. In examining the origins of the Korean War, such a remark of Kim IlSung in February 1948 deserves a cautious attention.

The founding of the KPA in February 1948 was especially significant in that the occasion was not only an epoch in the history of the KPA but also a major initiative taken by the North Korean leadership on the Korean unification issue. Up to late 1947, the North Korean regime had mainly focused its efforts on building 'a democratic base' in North Korea. On the Korean independence and unification issue they had been insisting upon the Provisional Korean Democratic Government formula through the US-USSR Joint Commission. The eventual failure of the US-USSR Joint Commission in October 1947 and presentation of the Korea issue before the United Nations where the United States was overwhelmingly dominating at that time meant for the North Korean regime that the possibility of forging a unified government over all Korea which North Korea could, sooner or later, transform into a communist-dominated government was all but gone. Among the North Korean leaders, a strong sense of impetuosity was suddenly emerging from late 1947. From the beginning of 1948, the North Korean leaders upgraded efforts for the unification issue taking two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, they intensified manoeuvres to sabotage the UNTCOK and general election in south Korea. On the other hand, they were busy making justifications for the future DPRK as the legitimate government over all Korea. The founding of the KPA in February 1948 was intended and timed to meet this two-pronged strategy; namely, encouraging the south Korean people in struggles against the UNTCOK; and demonstrating North Korean resolve to pursue their own scheme to build a separate government in north Korea.⁴⁰

Kim IlSung stipulated the characteristics of the KPA as follows. First of all, the KPA was the people's army, 'made of the sons and daughters of the workers, peasants and other sections of the Korean working people, which fights for the liberation and independence of the Korean nation and for the happiness of the masses against the imperialist aggressive forces from abroad and the reactionary forces at home.'⁴¹ So, the most important feature of the people's army was, Kim IlSung emphasised, that the people and the People's Army are closely connected with each other and can never be separated. Another important feature of the KPA was 'that its backbone was composed of true patriots of Korea who devoted their all in the past to the anti-Japanese armed struggle for the liberation of the country and the people in the face of brutal Japanese imperialistic suppression'.⁴² As such Kim IlSung stressed that the KPA was to be the successor to the spirit and the tradition of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

Kim IlSung's address at the founding of the KPA became a manifesto for the KPA. All the political training and education of the KPA was based on this manifesto. The Cultural Training Department of the KPA added some other points to this manifesto, reflecting the influence of Soviet military advisers. The following are the main points which were added to Kim IlSung's manifesto. First, the Korean People's Army was established and strengthened by the constant aid of the Soviet Union as well as by the able direction of Kim IlSung. Secondly, the Korean People's Army assimilated Soviet progressive military ideas, and benefited from numerous experiences of the Soviet army. Thirdly, the characteristics of the Korean People's Army and the source of its strength were based on the idea that all nations protecting freedom in the world strengthen their international friendship under the leadership of the Soviet Union. Fourthly, the regulation of the Korean People's Army, which is the foundation of victory, should be founded on the political and self-conscious ideas all military personnel hold for their fatherland and for the people. Fifthly, soldiers of the Korean People's Army should take part in international political movements.⁴³

With the official founding of the KPA some organisational changes were made in the people's army. On 4 February 1948, a National Defence Bureau was established. Kim Ch'aek, Vice-Chairman of the North Korean People's Committee, was named Director of the National Defence Bureau. It is open to further inquiry whether the establishment of the National Defence Bureau was only an official confirmation of the same bureau which was thought to have functioned since February 1947 under Kim Ch'aek's control. An article of condolence on Kim Ch'aek's death on 31 January 1951, which appeared in Nodong Shinmun on 2 February 1951, reported explicitly that Kim Ch'aek was named as Director of the National Defence Bureau in February 1947.⁴⁴ Though, other evidence has yet to be forwarded to second the evidence. An official almanac of North Korea put on record the statement that the establishment of the National Defence Bureau with Kim Ch'aek as its director was decided at the 58th session of the North Korea People's Committee on 4 February, 1948.⁴⁵

The Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters, which had been informally referred to as General Headquarters, the People's Army, since early 1947, was officially designated General Headquarters, the Korean People's Army. Ch'oe Yong-gon was to remain as Commander-in-Chief of the KPA. Exact relations between the National Defence Bureau headed by Kim Ch'aek and the General Headquarters headed by Ch'oe Yong-gon is open to further inquiry. A probable explanation of this relationship, deduced from overall understanding of the North Korean leadership structure at that time, would be; that the relationship between Kim Ch'aek and Ch'oe Yong-gon was a division of labour rather than a hierarchical structure. It seems that Kim Ch'aek was in charge of defence policy and administration while Ch'oe Yong-gon was responsible for organising and training of the KPA.⁴⁶

Interestingly, at the founding of the KPA in February 1948, Kim IlSung was not referred to as Supreme Commander of the KPA. He addressed the people's army in the capacity of Chairman of the North Korean People's Committee. As head of government, Kim IlSung was

entitled to be Supreme Commander of the people's army; however, he was not named so. One possible explanation for this question would be the fact that in communist countries, often, a supreme commander is not explicitly named in peacetime. For example, Stalin was named Supreme Commander of the Red Army in late 1941 only after the Red Army recovered from the first catastrophic defeat by the German Army. There is a possibility that in accordance with this precedent Kim IlSung was not named Supreme Commander of the KPA in February 1948.⁴⁷ (Kim IlSung was appointed Supreme Commander of the KPA in July 1950).

That the KPA was officially founded in February 1948 prior to the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in September 1948 has been an issue of controversy, especially in South Korea. In South Korea, a Korean Constabulary had existed and developed since December 1945 under the control of the US occupation authorities. The development of the Korean Constabulary into the ROK Army was made only after the Republic of Korea (ROK) government was established in August 1948. Why, then, did the North Korean regime make the existence of the people's army formal even before the establishment of the DPRK? Wasn't the KPA an illegitimate body which was given birth even before the advent of its parent body - the DPRK? What was the legal status of the KPA? A possible answer to this question can be found in the understanding of the legal status of the North Korean regime since 1945 as claimed by the Soviet occupation authorities and their North Korean proteges.⁴⁸

Unlike South Korea, in which the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) was imposed upon the Korean people as the sole government during the period from September 1945 to August 1948, in North Korea, a 'claim' was maintained throughout the Soviet occupation that the Korean people restored its sovereignty after the collapse of the Japanese colonial rule in August 1945. The provincial and local people's committees which emerged in North Korea just after the defeat of Japan were recognised by the Soviet occupation authorities as legitimate governing bodies. A central government in North Korea developed from these provincial and local people's committees. The

North Korean Administration of November 1945 was the first central government in North Korea. The North Korean Provisional People's Committee (NKPPC) of February 1946 was 'a people's dictatorial power committed to the tasks of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, and democratic revolution.'⁴⁹ The North Korean People's Committee (NKPC) of February 1947 was 'geared to carrying out the socialist revolution based on the results of the democratic reforms performed by the North Korean Provisional People's Committee.'⁵⁰ These various forms of governing bodies in North Korea had been proclaimed as legitimate as they were based on people's power.

So, when the KPA was founded in February 1948, a legitimate government which was entitled to have armed forces had already existed in the form of the North Korean People's Committee, according to the claim of the North Korean regime. It is noteworthy that in February 1948, the KPA was proclaimed as 'the people's army' under the control of the people's committee. At this stage, the KPA was not yet proclaimed as the national armed forces of the 'State of Korea'. The founding of the KPA was, according to Kim IlSung, 'only the first step towards building up a powerful, modern armed force of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which will be established in the future'.⁵¹

With the establishment of the DPRK in September 1948, a Ministry of National Defence was organised. Ch'oe Yong-gon was appointed Minister of National Defence. The line-up of the headquarters of the Ministry of National Defence was as follows: Kang Gon, Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Defence Minister; Kim Il, Chief of the Cultural Training Bureau and Deputy Defence Minister; Mu Chong, Chief of the Artillery Command Bureau and Deputy Defence Minister; Ch'oe Hong-guk, Chief of the Rear Services Bureau; Ch'oe In, Deputy Chief of the General Staff; Kim Ung, Chief of the Combat Training Bureau; and Kim Kwang-hyop, Chief of the Operations Bureau. Kim Pa was also reinstated as Chief of the Political Defence Bureau. This line-up of the North Korean high command was to remain almost unchanged until the beginning of the Korean War. Kim Ch'aek who had fostered the people's army since November 1945, and had been Director of the National

Defence Bureau just before the establishment of the Ministry of National Defence, was officially relieved of his duty. Though, as Minister of Industry, he was also responsible for defence industry, and maintained close connections with the Defence Ministry more than any other minister in the cabinet.⁵²

Along with these formal arrangements the KPA was expanding steadily throughout 1948. On 13 October 1948, the 3rd Infantry Division was activated in P'yongyang. The bulk of the division's strength was drawn from three main sources; the 3rd Independent Mixed Brigade; the 2nd Division from which an entire regiment was transferred; and from recruits in training centres. The 3rd Division deployed its regiments at Hungnam, Tokwon, and P'yonggang. On 15 October 1948, the 4th Independent Mixed Brigade was activated. The brigade consisted of three infantry battalions and six independent detachments. The headquarters of the brigade was located at Taedong, South P'yongan Province and its subunits were deployed at Sinuiju, Chinnampo, and P'yongyang. Earlier in 1948, with the founding of the Korean People's Army, the P'yongyang Institute was renamed the 2nd Central Political Officers School and the Central Security Officers School was renamed the 1st Central Officers School.⁵³

In December 1948, the 105th Tank Regiment was activated at Sadong, near P'yongyang. The origin of the 105th Tank Regiment was from a Soviet tank regiment stationed in P'yongyang until early 1948. From May 1947, the Soviet military advisers began to train Korean soldiers in the operation of the tank regiment. When the Soviet tank division withdrew from North Korea in early 1948, the division left 50 tanks and 300 troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Pyotor, a Soviet-Korean. With the founding of the KPA in February 1948, the training of Korean tank troops proceeded rapidly. By November 1948, the Korean troops were able to manage the tank regiment for themselves. In early December 1948, Lt. Col. Pyotor and the Soviet instructors withdrew from North Korea leaving 60 tanks, 30 self-propelled artillery pieces and 40 vehicles. With this equipment and trained Korean tank troops, the 105th Tank Regiment was activated in December 1948. The tank regiment

consisted of two tank battalions, one self-propelled artillery battalion, one engineer company, one reconnaissance company, one transportation company, and a medical detachment. Lt. Col. Yu Kyong-su, from the Kim IlSung group and formerly Commander of the 4th Regiment, 2nd Division, was appointed Commander of the 105th Tank regiment.⁵⁴

As of December 1948, the KPA consisted of three infantry divisions, one mixed brigade, one tank regiment, rear service troops, and various military academies, totalling 50,000 men. In addition to these regular forces, the security forces under the Ministry of the Interior added ready-reserve forces to the regular forces. The total strength of these security forces, consisting of two Security Brigades, the Railway Constabulary battalions, the Police Constabulary battalions, and the Coast Guard, was approximately 40,000 men. In all, the North Korea had 90,000 military and para-military troops at the end of 1948.⁵⁵

At the same period, the ROK Army had around 50,000 troops, consisting of six brigades. In terms of troop strength, the ROK Army and the KPA were nearly equal. But in terms of equipment, organisation, and training, the KPA was estimated to be ahead of the ROK Army. The ROK Army was, in this period, remaining as a constabulary mainly engaged in domestic security missions, while the KPA was developing into a full-fledged combat force. The National Police of South Korea, with 45,000 men, was mainly a public safety police. Compared with the security forces of North Korea, The National Police of South Korea was hardly counted to be equal to a para-military force. In this regard, the ROK Army was in an adverse condition than the KPA. Moreover, from October 1948 on, the ROK Army became engaged in quelling mutinies agitated by south Korean communists. Even if the ROK Army troops gained some combat experiences through these operations, regular training programmes on large-unit or combined forces level were inevitably suspended for those small-unit punitive operations. In this regard, the ROK Army was also behind the KPA.⁵⁶

By the end of 1948, the People's Army of North Korea became well established. The KPA came to have a semblance of a modern, regular army. The fact that as early as September 1947, the Soviet government proposed withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea signified the confidence of the Soviet occupation authorities and their North Korean protégés in the progress of the KPA. By the time the founding of the Korean People's Army was declared in February 1948, the people's army had, though still modest in size, become a well organised army. With the founding of the DPRK in September 1948, the KPA became a national armed force with all formalities. The withdrawal of the Soviet forces from North Korea in December 1948 was therefore a vindication of the development of the KPA.

The characteristic feature of the growth of the people's army of North Korea during this period is that it was developing very methodically, compared with its opponent in the south. In fostering the South Korean Constabulary, the forerunner of the ROK Army, the US military government's methods were marked by expediency. A company size unit was first raised in each of the eight provinces. The companies were expanded into battalions, regiments and brigades in turn, by recruiting local youths. Contrastingly, the organisers of the KPA raised division size units from the beginning. The cadres of these divisions, who were seasoned veterans through the anti-Japanese struggle or the Chinese Civil War, first constituted the backbone of the divisions and transformed these rudimentary divisions into trained fighting forces. The difference between the north and south in building armies was not simply a matter of differing methods and procedures. It reflected significant differences in US and Soviet policies. While the US military government was busy policing the vortex in South Korea, the Soviet occupation authorities were pursuing a well conceived programme of fostering a self-reliant North Korean regime. That the KPA was well established by late 1948 was mainly due to such sound Soviet policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARDS A WAR, 1948.12-1950.6

From late 1948 to June 1950 the KPA proceeded rapidly with the preparations for a war with South Korea. During this period the North Korean leadership upgraded their efforts to weaken the south, together with strengthening the north. The decision to launch a war against the south was based on the North Korean leaders' confidence in their strengthened position, contrasted with the weakened situation in South Korea (in their estimate.) It is estimated that North Korean leaders made the Korean War decision possibly by the end of 1949 and later Soviet and Chinese leaders approved the adventure in early 1950. During this period the expansion of the KPA was remarkable: it almost tripled in strength and armament within less than a year and a half. The influx of the Korean veterans in the Chinese Communist Forces contributed greatly to the upgrading of the KPA as a seasoned army. Vast Soviet aid in building mechanised troops and an air force and in upgrading KPA armament transformed the KPA from modestly equipped light infantry divisions into a balanced modern army. With the intensifying of the south-north rivalry from early 1948, a kind of pseudo-warfare continued between the north and south in the form of border conflicts and guerilla provocations in the rear of South Korea, until a couple of months before the outbreak of the war in June 1950. The ominous lull of some months was coupled with a resumed peace offensive from the north. For the KPA, this pause was, in effect, the time for the last preparations for the war.

Political Setting

In the new year address of 1949 Kim Il Sung called for 'the whole Korean people's grand save-the-nation struggle' to bring about

'territorial integrity and complete national independence and sovereignty in the near future'.¹ In this address Kim IlSung recalled the year 1948 as the one 'in which the most brilliant achievements were attained in the annals of our nation's struggle for reunification and independence.'² He affirmed that, through these achievements 'bases and conditions for achieving national reunification and building of a completely independent and sovereign state in the not-too-distant future (emphasis by author) were prepared.'³

On what is to be done to further these bases and conditions prepared so far, Kim IlSung remarked as follows:

The people in the northern half of the Republic must channelize all manpower and material forces to further consolidate and promote the successes achieved in the democratic reforms over the past three years since liberation, to strengthen the political and economic foundations of the Republic and to cement the democratic base in the Republic.⁴

Our fellow countrymen in the southern half of the Republic must fight more fiercely for the withdrawal of US troops from our soil, and expose the true colours of the "UNTCOK" which lends validity to the US imperialist policy of colonial enslavement. They must bring to light all the country-selling agreements concluded by the puppet government, reject and obliterate all its "laws" and traitorous "administrative policies". Our compatriots in the south, in coordination with the patriotic mutinies of the "National Defence Army" must wage the save-the-nation struggle more vigorously to overthrow the treacherous puppet government and achieve territorial integrity and the country's complete independence and sovereignty.⁵

The above urge of Kim IlSung was an express manifestation of the 'strengthen the north, weaken the south' policy, in other words, the Democratic Base Line and the United Front Line.

It is significant to note that while Kim IlSung was repeatedly appealing in the address for 'a fierce save-the-nation struggle for territorial integrity' his emphasis was, at that stage, on strengthening the political and economic foundations of North Korea rather than initiating radical actions for the liberation of South Korea. His position on the liberation of South Korea was still that of encouraging south Koreans in their struggle for the reunification. Kim IlSung raised the Two-Year National Economic Plan as a prime task to be fulfilled by the north Korean people for the following two years. The economic plan was the first genuine economic development plan in North Korea. It's objective was to attain or surpass the highest level of production before liberation (1945) in all spheres of the North Korean economy. The North Korean leadership regarded the success of the economic plan as a prerequisite for taking a more vigorous initiative in the reunification issue of Korea. So, as of early 1949, while raising the banner of the save-the-nation struggle for reunification, the North Korean leadership was, in practice, more concerned about the Two-Year National Economic Plan⁶.

In March 1949, Kim IlSung made an official visit to Moscow. Kim's entourage included the following ministers: Pak Hon-yong, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister; Hong Myong-hui, Deputy Premier; Chong Ch'un-taek, Chairman of the State Planning Commission; Chang Si-u, Commerce Minister; Baek Nam-un, Education Minister; and Kim Chong-ju, Communication Minister. Neither Defence Minister nor the senior service chief was included in this delegation. T.P. Shtykov, Soviet ambassador to North Korea, accompanied the North Korean delegation. On 17 March 1949, the North Korean delegation concluded 'an agreement on economic and cultural cooperation' with the Soviet government. The major clauses of the agreement were as follows: (1) to increase trade relations between two countries; (2) to confer most-favoured-nation

treatment on each other in matters regarding trade, navigation, and individual and corporate bodies' activities; (3) to facilitate cultural cooperation; and (4) to increase exchange of know-how on industry and agriculture. The agreement was to hold ten years.⁷

Based on this agreement, six protocols were signed between relevant ministers of the two countries on such items as the following: (1) a three-year, 212 million rouble loan to North Korea; (2) Soviet technical assistance to North Korea; (3) treatment of Soviet experts working in North Korea; (4) trade between the two countries during 1949 and 1950; (5) exchange of scholars and students; and (6) coordination in communications area. North Korea was to receive the 212 million roubles from July 1949, in instalments, ranging over three years up to June 1952. The loan was for settling 'an excess of imports' from the Soviet Union. Thus Kim IlSung's Moscow visit of March 1949 was mainly related to the economic and technical development of North Korea.⁸

With regard to this North Korean-Soviet agreement, there has been some speculation on the possibility of secret dealing on security matters such as a military alliance between the two countries or a Korean war decision in the near future. So far no primary source materials are available to back up this speculation convincingly, except for some euphemistic hints which could possibly be interpreted as such. On the conclusion of the North Korean-Soviet agreement on 17 March 1949, a Soviet press comment noted that North Korea could expect 'all-round' assistance from the Soviet Union.⁹ Another hint was from Stalin. At the celebration party on 17 March, Stalin introduced three high-ranking Soviet officers to the North Korean delegation. These officers were: General S.M. Stemenko, Chief of the General Staff; Admiral I.S. Yermashev, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy; and Marshal of Aviation, K.A. Vershinin, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force. This gesture by Stalin was received by the North Korean delegation, according to Baek Nam-un, Education Minister, as implying that North Korea could expect military assistance from the Soviet Union, if needed.¹⁰ These two episodes are, in fact, too ambivalent to be

considered hard evidence on this question. Even if this issue is still open to controversy in the absence of primary source materials to refute such a speculation, it is the contention of this author that there must be strong doubts as to the possibility of such secret dealing on security matters between the two countries at this stage. At least, it is unlikely that the Korean War decision was made during Kim IlSung's Moscow visit of March 1949. This will be discussed in detail later.

There has also been speculation that the North Korean delegation concluded a mutual defence treaty with the Chinese communists during this Moscow visit. The Central News Agency of the Chinese Nationalist Government reported on 5 May 1949 that the two sides concluded a mutual defence treaty to the effect that : (1) common defence against aggression of whatever nature; (2) supply to North Korea of arms, materiel and manpower from Manchuria from June 1949 to August 1949; (3) North Korea's preferential right over utilising Japanese technicians and employees and war materiel in Manchuria and (4) an economic barter system.¹¹ So far no primary source materials are available to back up this claim. However, some relevant evidence and circumstantial reasoning indicates that such a claim is very doubtful. Baek Nam-un left a detailed record of this Moscow visit. According to him there was no encounter between the North Korean delegation and the Chinese communist dignitaries, let alone a mutual defence treaty between North Korea and the CCP. As of March 1949, the Chinese communists were in the last phase of the Chinese Civil War. The founding of the People's Republic of China was declared on 1 October 1949. It is unnatural to claim that a formal defence treaty was signed between the DPRK (a state) and the CCP (a party) in March 1949. At the time of early 1949, nearly all the Japanese soldiers and civilians captured in Manchuria had already been repatriated to Japan or sent to Siberia. In the absence of hard evidence, the existence of a formal defence pact between North Korean and the Chinese communists from as early as March 1949 is not convincing.¹²

From the late spring of 1949 the North Korean leadership upgraded its efforts for the reunification issue. On 12 May, a proposal was raised to form a Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland (DFRF) by the Democratic National United Front of South Korea (DNUFSK), the umbrella organisation for all the left-wing parties and social organisations in South Korea. On 16 May, the Democratic National United Front of North Korea (DNUFNK), the opposite party in North Korea, accepted the DNUFSK's proposal. At the 39th Session of the Central Committee of the DNUFNK on 16 May, Kim IlSung stated that forming this front [DFRF] 'to rally around it the entire patriotic and democratic forces in north and south Korea will mark an epoch making advance (emphasis by author) in our people's struggle for the country's reunification and territorial integrity'.¹³ He urged that 'all the political parties and social organisations affiliated with DNUFNK must do everything in their power to make sure that the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland is successfully established'.¹⁴

On 25 June 1949 (coincidentally, just one year before the outbreak of the Korean War) a conference was held to form the DFRF, attended by 704 delegates representing 71 political parties and social organisations in north and south Korea. A seven-member presidium of the central committee was elected. Interestingly, Kim IlSung was not elected as member of the presidium. Instead he was elected as member of the Central Standing Committee of the Democratic Front, most probably to give the impression that DFRF was literally the highest, national united front of which the North Korean Workers' Party was only a part. In fact the DFRF was 'an apparatus of the [North Korean] regime for mobilising all non-communist democratic forces in north and south Korea' to lead 'southern strategy'.¹⁵

The roles and character of the DFRF was well expressed in the programme and manifesto of its inaugural conference. Major points of the programme were as follows: (1) to struggle for the withdrawal of the American troops and the UN Commission; (2) to mobilise all forces of the Korean people for the speedy reunification of the country; (3)

to struggle for the realisation in South Korea of democratic reforms consistent with the lines carried out in North Korea; and (4) to struggle for blocking the revival of imperial Japan.¹⁶

In the manifesto, 'the Measures for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country' were proposed. Their major points were as follows:¹⁷

- (1) The US troops and the UN commission must be withdrawn immediately so that Korea's peaceful reunification could be effected by the Korean people themselves.
- (2) A general election should be held in September 1949 throughout the whole of Korea to establish a single supreme legislature for all Korea, under the supervision of an election committee appointed by representatives of democratic parties and social organisations in north and south Korea.
- (3) The election supervisory committee should be given the following power, in addition to the preparation for and conduct of the general election: (1) to monitor the withdrawal of foreign troops; (2) to control all the police and security forces of north and south Korea; and (3) to expel from these police and security forces pro-Japanese elements and those who were instrumental in the oppression of people's struggle in south Korea.
- (4) The legislature so elected shall adopt a constitution of the Korean republic and form a government based on that constitution. The government shall dissolve the existing governments in north and south Korea after taking over their functions.
- (5) The armed forces in north and south Korea shall be merged according to the democratic principles. Those in the south Korean army who took part in the oppression of

people's struggle shall be discharged from the army and prime figures shall be punished.

The DFRF's programme and manifesto of June 1949 was the embodiment of cardinal points and strategy of the North Korean regime toward the reunification issue and its stance against the South Korean government. The North Korean proposal was, in effect, to order a virtual surrender of sovereignty of the ROK government to the North Korean regime. The programme and manifesto of the DFRF was, in fact, meant to instigate 'the people' in south Korea rather than to propose a possible deal to 'the government' of south Korea. It was an open exhibition of the core of the United Front Line which aimed to disintegrate 'the government' in south Korea, whether the US Army Military Government in Korea or the ROK government, by instigating and mobilising the 'people around it'. It has been a customary practice for the North Korean regime to offer a hardly acceptable proposal to the South Korean government and blame the South Korean government for failing to respond to the proposal positively and appeal directly to the people in the south to rally around 'the constructive initiative' of the north. The central theme of this 'southern strategy' has remained unaltered for the last forty years.¹⁸

The forming of the DFRF in June 1949 was surely 'an epoch-making advance' in North Korea's initiative towards the reunification issue. Until early 1949 the North Korean regime took the position that the liberation of south Korea was, in the first place, the task of the people in the south while affirming its responsibility for moral and, if possible, material support of such struggle in the south. In connection with the forming of the DFRF, the North Korean regime revealed an important change in its position on this issue. At the Sixth Meeting of the Central Committee of the North Korean Workers' Party on 11 June 1949 Kim IlSung declared, after detailing the situation of south Korea 'under the barbarous rule of the US imperialists and the Syngman Rhee puppet clique',¹⁹ as follows:

We can never remain indifferent to the miseries and sufferings of our compatriots in south Korea. We must rescue them from these grave calamities as soon as possible.²⁰

(emphasis by author)

Now the liberation of south Korea had become an urgent task which, according to Kim IlSung, should not be left merely in the hands of the people in the south but be realised as soon as possible with the rescue of the people in the north. In order to carry out this task successfully, 'all patriotic forces must rally together and the whole nation must rise in unison as one body',²¹ said Kim IlSung. The forming of the DFRF was to respond to this imperative calling. The significance of the forming of the DFRF was that the North Korean leadership made the resolve to assume the role of prime mover rather than an aid donator in the liberation of south Korea. This meant that the issue of the liberation of south Korea became, for the North Korean leadership, 'a policy objective' rather than 'a declaratory goal'.²²

No less significant was the fact that with the forming of the DFRF all the progressive political parties and social organisations of north and south Korea was placed under the control of the North Korean leadership. The identity of the south Korean communists, whether they remained in south Korea, or escaped to north Korea, had hitherto been maintained, in spite of their declining position vis-à-vis north Korean communists, especially since two separate governments were established in north and south Korea in 1948. The forming of the DFRF implied that the North Korean leadership wanted no longer such a loose federation of south and north Korean communists but resolved to take firm control of all available resources in their hands with a view to pursuing the 'southern strategy' more actively.²³

The merger of the North and South Korean Workers' Parties into the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) on 30 June 1949 was to finalise for organisational arrangements strengthening 'the unity of the working class in north and south Korea, the unity of all democratic forces and

unity of true patriots.'²⁴ Since August 1948, a joint central leading body of two parties had been functioning under the name of the 'Joint Central Committee of the North and South Korean Workers' Parties'. Upon the merging of the two parties, this joint central leading body was reorganised into a Political Committee of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. The two existing party central committees were unified into a single central committee. The Political Committee was the presidium of the unified Central Committee. Kim IlSung was named Chairman of the Political Committee. Pak Hon-yong was named Vice-Chairman. Other members of the Political Committee were: Kim Ch'aek, the faithful lieutenant of Kim IlSung; Pak Il-u, Kim Tu-bong, both from the Yen-an group; Ho Ka-i, a Soviet-Korean; and Yi Sung-yop, Kim Sam-ryong, and Ho Hon, all from the South Korean Workers' Party. Ostensibly a balance of power among competing factions was maintained. However, there was no doubt that Kim IlSung was the paramount leader.²⁵

At the occasion of the establishment of the WPK, Kim IlSung hinted at an extraordinary measure for the reunification of the country, in case approaches calling for the peaceful reunification failed to materialise. While still emphasising the programme of the DFRF of 28 June 1948 as the party's 'action programme for the country's reunification and independence and for establishing democracy',²⁶ Kim IlSung cautioned the party to prepare for another line of action for the reunification issue as follows:

We are not proposing a peaceful reunification of the country because we are weak. Our people who have gained their freedom and independence through harsh struggle will never yield to anybody the happiness and rights they enjoy.²⁷

If the Syngman Rhee puppet regime refuses our proposal as set out in the declaration of the Inaugural Conference of the DFRF, for the peaceful reunification of the country, we will not confine ourselves to it. Instead, we will seek various ways and means for the solution of this question and set up a

unified, independent and sovereign democratic state without fail.²⁸ (emphasis by author)

It is natural to suppose that the 'various ways and means' could include an all-out attack against South Korea.

It is open to controversy how and when the Korean War decision was made. A tentative summary of my arguments on this questions is as follows:

- * The all-out attack the KPA launched against the south in June 1950 was only the final phase of North Korea's reunification policy since 1945.
- * The idea of a Korean war was first raised by the North Korean leadership and, by the end of 1949, they made the final decision to launch the war.
- * The invasion plan was approved by Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, no later than the end of February 1950.
- * The communist leaders viewed a Korean war principally as a domestic conflict and barely anticipated that the Americans would intervene in the Korean civil conflict en masse.

It is suggestive to begin a discussion of this question with Khrushchev Remembers which provides a good summation of the decision-making process regarding the Korean War. According to Khrushchev:

At the end of 1949, Kim IlSung arrived in Moscow to see Stalin. He wanted to prod south Korea with the point of a bayonet. Naturally Stalin could not oppose this idea. But Stalin was worried that the Americans would jump in, [yet] we were inclined to think that if the war were won swiftly, then intervention by the USA could be avoided. Mao approved Kim's suggestion and put forward the opinion that the USA would not intervene since the war would be an internal matter... We had

already been giving arms to North Korea for sometime. The designated hour had arrived and the war began.²⁹

Khrushchev's remarks contain almost all of the major points on the timing and rationales behind the communist leaders' decision on the Korean War. First, the idea of a Korean war was initiated by Kim IlSung and later approved by Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. Secondly, the decision was made during the winter of 1949-50. Thirdly, the probability of US intervention was the prime consideration in assessing the possibility for the success of the invasion. Fourthly, the communist leaders justified a Korean war as an internal affair and they expected that such reasoning would also be accepted by the Americans.

Whereas there are few objections to the theory that in the Korean War decision Kim IlSung, Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung were involved more or less, it has been open to discussion as to whom the prime mover of the decision was. Traditional views on the origins of the Korea War have pointed to Stalin as the real mastermind behind the Korean War, as well summarised in a brief statement by David. J. Dallin that 'the Korean War was planned, prepared, and initiated by Stalin.'³⁰ For another example of this kind, Adam B. Ulam asserted that 'everything then would point to the conclusion that the Korean affairs were undertaken at the Soviet initiative. That North Korea would have attacked on its own is inconceivable.'³¹ Then, why did Stalin initiate a war in Korea? The following hypothetical explanations have been raised: (1) the diversionary move theory which holds that the Korean War was intended to divert the mounting American build-up in Europe to the Far East; (2) the soft-spot probing theory which suspects the 'expansionist-minded' Stalin eager to obtain (seemingly) unclaimed property, such as south Korea after the withdrawal of US forces; (3) the will-test theory refers to Stalin's possible attempt to test the resolve or capacity of American resistance against the Soviet challenge. While the above theories are mainly concerned with the Soviet policy vis-à-vis the United States, the following theories emphasise the reasoning behind Soviet policy towards China and Japan;

(1) the attrition theory which suspects Moscow's calculated design to bring China into irreconcilable conflict with the United States; and (2) the Japan factor theory which points to the Soviet move to thwart a US-Japan alliance.³²

The weak point of these various theories on Stalin's motivation to initiate a war in Korea is that there are few archival or other primary sources to back them. These theories are in most cases deduced from pre-shaped frame of reference regarding the foreign policy of the Soviet Union in this period. As one of the forerunners of these traditionalists acknowledges, 'the most accepted explanation of Soviet motivation is still the most logical one.'³³ Many Sovietologists are agreed that Stalin was very cautious in his foreign policy and the Soviet government was sidestepping direct military confrontation with the United States in this period. Seen from hindsight and owing to a more advanced Sovietology than that on which such traditionalists had depended, a more reasonable explanation of Stalin's involvement in the decision making of the Korean War would be that he would not have wanted to incur a direct confrontation with the United States in a Korean war. On the other hand, the attrition theory which supposed on the part of Stalin such a far-reaching insight and adroit stratagem as anticipating irreconcilable US-Chinese relations brought out by the Korean conflict is too speculative to be seriously considered. The Chinese intervention in the Korean War was to counter the massive US intervention. In early 1950, such a possibility of US intervention in a Korean 'civil' conflict had hardly been considered to be great among Kim IlSung, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. The Japan factor theory needs some notice; however, not as the prime motive of the Korean War, but as a side effect from the Korean War.³⁴

Whereas there is no conclusive evidence to establish the Stalin's initiative theory, there is strong evidence to advocate the position that the Korean War issue was first raised by Kim IlSung and later was approved and supported by Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. Khrushchev's remarks on this matter is one such fragment of evidence though there is some reservation on the trustworthiness of the Remembers and his

recollection of this matter. However, more tangible evidence on this question is the actual proceedings of North Korean preparation for the Korean War. During the period from late 1948 to early 1950, the strength of the KPA virtually tripled. The interesting thing is the process of this rapid expansion. The KPA expanded tangentially on two occasions. The first leap, which doubled the strength of the KPA as of late 1948 came in July to August 1949, mostly owing to the influx of about 20,000 Korean veterans who had served in the CCF. The second leap which increased by 50% the strength of the KPA as of late 1949 came in March to May 1950. While the first leap was make up for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the second leap was wholly devoted to getting the KPA ready for the Korean War in the immediate future. It was during this period that large quantities of war materiel arrived in North Korea from the Soviet Union.

Through these events, there is no refuting that Soviet assistance and Chinese cooperation was enormous. However, the Soviet Union and PRC were, no matter how much they contributed to the expansion of the KPA, basically third parties. If main considerations are given to the substantial size of Soviet and Chinese cooperation and assistance, the North Korean initiative theory could be seen as too superficial. Thus, that Kim IlSung raised the idea of a Korean War first could be translated into the argument that Stalin got Kim IlSung to raise the idea first.³⁵ The following sections of this chapter are devoted to refuting this kind of frame of reference and to showing that a strict conceptual distinction between North Korean initiative and Soviet and Chinese assistance is necessary and possible.

The crucial question raised by the communist leaders regarding the possibility of the success of the Korean adventure was the probability of US intervention in such a Korean war. Khrushchev quoted the remark that if the war should be a civil war and if it were won swiftly the United States would not intervene in the war. To examine this judgement of the communist leaders is an inquiry into the international causes of the Korean War. That the United States and the Soviet Union had not the same degree of commitment to Korea was

one of the root causes of the Korean War. The basic position of the Russians was to extend their sphere of influence in Korea as far as possible. Whereas the Americans wanted to thwart such a Russian expansion towards Korea as early as possible. These different basic attitudes of the two powers influenced their Korean policy and strategy before the coming of the Korean War.³⁶

Doubts about US firm stance in Korea began in late 1947 with the US bringing the Korean issue before the United Nations. In October 1947 a United Nations Temporary Committee on Korea (UNTCOK) was set up to deal with the Korean issue. By the spring of 1948, the UNTCOK failed, as might have been anticipated, to settle the reunification and independence problems of all Korea. By September 1948, two governments appeared on each side of the 38th parallel. With the establishment of two separate governments in Korea, all foreign troops were to withdraw by the end of the year. There arose intense debates within the US government about the US responsibility for the security of South Korea. Concerned State Department officials maintained that the United States should consider the containment value of South Korea in the light of the China setback and Japan's security. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, had held since September 1947 that the United States had 'little strategic interest' in Korea. The eventual withdrawal of US troops from South Korea in June 1949 was the express conclusion regarding the ends-means relationship in the US security policy regarding South Korea. The withdrawal of US troops could, understandably, be interpreted by the communist leaders as indicating that the United States would not intervene in a Korean war.³⁷

The changing atmosphere among US security planners from late 1949, to be embodied in the NSC-68 of April 1950, was not yet fully channelled into US foreign and defence policies as of early 1950. At that time, the NSC-68 was being conceived only among the highest political and military leaders of the US government. As a matter of fact, if the Korean war had not broken out in June 1950, the policy initiatives conceived in the NSC-68 would not have been put in practice in US foreign and defence policies so quickly. In this

sense, the coming of the Korean war was, to US security planners, a 'blessing'.³⁸ It is understandable that under such circumstances, the communist leaders did not take seriously US intentions to intervene in a Korean war. Although Stalin reserved a condition that the war should be won swiftly lest the United States had any intention and chance of intervening, the reservation was overshadowed by the general mood and impression among the communist leaders of the Korean policy of the US government in this period. That Mao Tse-tung saw a Korean war as an internal matter and anticipated that the US government would think in the same context is a reflection of such an understanding of the US Korean policy by the communist leaders.

In the new year address of 1950, Kim IlSung declared:

The entire Korean people who are ushering in the New Year today, are confronted with the sublime task of materialising territorial integrity and national reunification as soon as possible through a year of fiercer struggle against US imperialists and the treacherous Syngman Rheeites.³⁹

They [the servicemen of the People's Army, the Security Forces and the Public Security Corps] will then be fully prepared, at all times, to dependably safeguard the victorious results of democratic reforms and annihilate the enemy at any moment, in response to the call of the country and the people.⁴⁰

Victory is in store for the Korean people who have risen in their just struggle for the reunification and independence of the country, freedom and democracy. Let us march forward vigorously in this new year of 1950 to achieve new victories in the struggle for territorial integrity and national reunification. Long live the reunified Korean people!⁴¹

Following Kim IlSung's declaration, the KPA leadership, headed by Ch'oe Yong-gon, Defence Minister, and Kim Il, Chief of the Cultural

Training Bureau, began to issue orders to the KPA troops to be prepared to sweep the enemy 'at any time'.⁴² So from the beginning of 1950, an all-out war between the north and the south in the immediate future was becoming an open secret in North Korea. Intelligence sources in South Korea were also anticipating as much. But, to have information and to take necessary measures to correspond to that information are different things. The political and military leadership of South Korea was, while crying wolf repeatedly, not taking measures at their disposal to prepare for such an eventuality. Thus, a catastrophe was approaching to South Korea just with the beginning of the year 1950.⁴³

The Expansion of the KPA

The expansion of the KPA started along with the withdrawal of Soviet troops in North Korea in December 1948. In late 1945, the Soviet occupation forces totalled an army of seven rifle divisions plus one motor-rifle division, one air force division, and some elements of the Soviet Pacific Fleet. By the time the Soviet government proposed to the US government the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea, in September 1947, the Soviet occupation forces in North Korea had already been reduced to an army corps of two divisions and some elements of air force.⁴⁴ With the founding of the DPRK in September 1948, the Soviet government announced that it would withdraw its troops from North Korea by the end of 1948. On 26 December 1948, the Soviet government declared that its forces had withdrawn entirely from North Korea, (except for some scores of military advisers). The US government also scheduled to withdraw its forces from South Korea by the end of 1948. But, due to the worsening situation in South Korea at around the end of the 1948, especially due to the outbreak of a large-scale mutiny in the ROK army, the US withdrawal plan was altered to some extent. A regimental combat team of 7,500 men strength remained in South Korea until June 1949. In June 1949, the remaining US troops were also evacuated, leaving a Military Advisory Group to Korea (KMAG) of 500 men.

Along with the withdrawal of the Soviet occupation forces, the Soviet government developed programmes for strengthening the KPA. In a working level meeting in early December 1948, chaired by N.A. Bulganin, Defence Minister, the Soviet government hammered out a plan as follows:

1. The KPA shall be strengthened to six shock divisions level. (As of December 1948, the KPA had three infantry divisions and one independent mixed brigade.)
2. For the organisation of more KPA divisions the Chinese Communist Force shall release 20,000 to 25,000 Korean troops in the CCF to North Korea.
3. Two tank divisions shall be organised with 500 tanks. The expansion of the air force was to be reserved for the time being, taking into consideration international problems it might evoke, (especially US apprehension to the security of Japan.)
4. All these programmes were to be implemented within 18 months.⁴⁵

In late December 1948, a special Soviet military mission was sent to North Korea to work out this KPA expansion programme. The Soviet special military mission consisted of about forty high and middle ranking officers. T.P. Shtykov, the Soviet Ambassador to North Korea led the military mission. On its way to North Korea, the Soviet military mission convened a working-level conference in Harbin, northern Manchuria, to sort out the details of the repatriation of Korean troops in the CCF. From the Chinese side Zhou Bao-zhong represented the North-East Democratic Government (a provisional government in Manchuria established by Chinese communists.) (Zhou Bao-zhong was formerly Commander of the 88th Special Brigade under the command of Soviet Far East Military District, in the early 1940s.) Ch'oe Yong-gon, Defence Minister of North Korea, and Mu Chong, Deputy Defence Minister and the leader of the Chinese-affiliated Yen-an group, represented the North Korean government. At this three-party

conference, it was agreed that the Korean troops in the CCF should be sent to North Korea by September 1949 in two echelons. After making this settlement, the Soviet mission arrived in P'yongyang in mid-January 1949.⁴⁶

The main function of the Soviet special military mission was two-fold: first, to examine the soundness of the Moscow-made KPA expansion programme, based on their first hand estimate of the KPA and the Korean troops in the CCF, and the situation of the North Korean economy to support the KPA; secondly, to augment the existing Soviet military advisers headed by Major-General Smirnov. The high-ranking officers of the military mission were mainly to fulfill the first function and soon returned to Moscow after they acquired needed answers. For instance, Lieutenant-General Kubanov, armour specialist, altered the original plan of two tank divisions, taking into consideration the rugged mountainous terrain of Korea. Instead, the KPA was to have one tank division, receiving 150 tanks first, and 100 tanks later. The mid-ranking officers of the military mission were mainly specialists in armoured units and air force and they remained in North Korea until April 1950. (In April 1950, an operation team of a dozen Soviet officers, headed by Lieutenant-General Vasiliev, arrived in North Korea to work out the war plan for the Korean war.) Before the arrival of the armour and air force specialists, the Soviet military advisory group, headed by Major-General Smirnov, had been mainly engaged in organising and training the basic units of the KPA. Augmented by the special military mission, the Soviet military advisory group was, from early 1949, geared to transforming the rudimentary light infantry divisions of the KPA into heavily-equipped 'shock divisions'.⁴⁷

On the significance of the Moscow decision of December 1948 on the expansion of the KPA and the role of the Soviet special military mission there have been some theories. For instance, there is a claim that the Moscow meeting of December 1948 (or the Moscow special strategic conference, according to this claim) was the very time and place in which the Korean war decision was made among the Soviet

government and representatives of North Korea and Chinese communists.⁴⁸ Even though it is acceptable that the Soviet government was intent on building up of the KPA for 'a possible Korean war', it is not likely that it made the Korean war decision at this stage. (Discussion on the timing and process of the Korean War decision among the communist leaders is produced in the preceding section.)

There is also a speculation that North Korean and Chinese communist delegates attended the Moscow meeting of December 1948, which is very doubtful. At the Harbin conference held in early January 1949, just weeks after the Moscow meeting, North Korean and Chinese communists were represented by Ch'oe Yong-gon and Zhou Baozhong, perhaps the highest officials, except for Kim IlSung and Mao Tse-tung, for this kind of occasion. If they had attended the 'Moscow special strategic conference' they did not have to attend the Harbin conference again. Lesser men would have been enough to sort out details. Conversely speaking, it seems more reasonable to assume that the Harbin conference of January 1949 was the first session in which the Soviet special military mission conferred with representatives of North Korea and Chinese communists on the expansion programme of the KPA, especially on the repatriation of Korean troops in the CCF. It leads to a conclusion that the Moscow meeting of December 1948 was basically a working level meeting among high officials in the Soviet Ministry of Defence. It is possible to assume that some North Korean or Chinese officers were invited to the meeting for consultation purpose; however, no more than that.⁴⁹

Another susceptible theory on the Moscow decision of December 1948 was that the Soviet government decided to increase the size of the KPA to a total of 22 divisions in the future. The 22 divisions the KPA was to have, according to this theory, comprised the following: six shock divisions, manoeuvre troops composed of eight first line divisions, and a reserve force of eight divisions.⁵⁰ The absurdity of this claim is evident when one thinks of the actual strength of the KPA at the beginning of the Korean War. On 25 January 1950, the KPA had seven infantry divisions (the so-called shock divisions) plus

armoured troops equivalent to one tank division (interestingly, the total of which is eight first line divisions). Three under-strength infantry divisions were to follow the first line divisions. In addition to these KPA troops, three security brigades under the Ministry of the Interior could expand into infantry divisions in some weeks. By any standards the KPA had no more than 14 divisions, eighth first line divisions and six half-strength divisions (in average.) So, at least the 22 division KPA (if any), was not the one which the Soviet government envisioned in December 1948, to be built within 18 months.

Then, what was the reasoning of the Soviet government behind the Moscow decision of December 1948? It is noteworthy that the KPA strength at the beginning of the Korean War was at least one and a half times larger than the KPA strength planned in Moscow in December 1948. Added forces compared to the Moscow plan were the following: one infantry division manned by Korean veterans in the CCF; three reserve divisions; one air force division; and a small size, coast guard-type navy. Notably, most of these reinforcements were made during the spring of 1950, that is after the Korean War decision had supposedly been made among the communist leaders of North Korea, the Soviet Union, and the PRC. So it is important to see the Moscow plan of December 1948 per se, not to be confused with the invasion force-level of the KPA in June 1950.⁵¹

Evidently, the Moscow plan intended, at least for the time being, to build a KPA of six infantry divisions and one tank division. At the end of 1948, the KPA had three infantry divisions, one mixed brigade, and one tank regiment. Interestingly, Soviet troops which were to withdraw from North Korea by the end of 1948 were two division forces. It is understandable that security planners in the Soviet Union and North Korea might have felt a strong need to raise the proper size of KPA troops to make up for the two Soviet divisions. Opportunely, there were about 25,000 Korean troops - two division size - in the CCF, who were soon to be available for this purpose with the closing of the Chinese Civil War. As mentor of the North Korean

regime, the Soviet government should have felt obliged to get its client to have the semblance of a sizable modern, regular army. Six divisions augmented by a sizable armoured unit would rather fit that purpose. In conclusion, as of late 1948, the major concerns of the Soviet government was to upgrade the KPA to some normal standard first rather than to rush preparations for a Korean war.⁵²

The build-up of the mechanised unit in the KPA was made visible in May 1949 with the formation of the 105th Tank Brigade. The 105th Tank Regiment formed in December 1948 was the nucleus of the newly activated 105th Tank Brigade. After the Soviet special military mission arrived in January 1949, the 105th Tank Regiment had been undergoing rapid expansion and intensive training. The 105th Tank Brigade had three tank regiments, each with 40 tanks. The 1st Tank Regiment was called the 107th Tank Regiment in code name; likewise the 2nd, 109th; and the 3rd, 203rd. In addition, the brigade consisted of the following units: the 208th Tank Training Regiment; the 206th Motorized Infantry Regiment; one artillery group with 64 piece SU-76 self-propelled guns; the 303rd Motorcycle Cavalry; one engineer battalion; one maintenance company; and a medical unit. The table of organisation strength of the brigade was 6,000 men. In August 1949, the 603rd Motorcycle Training Cavalry was added to the brigade. By the end of August 1949, the 105th Tank Brigade reached a tank division in all but name having 150 tanks and 8,800 men.⁵³

During July to August 1949, about 20,000 Korean troops in the CCF arrived in North Korea. In late July 1949, the all-Korean 166th Division arrived in Sinuiju under the command of Bang Ho-san, political commissar of the division. The division was reorganised into the 6th Division of the KPA. Bang Ho-san was appointed Commander of the 6th Division. In early August 1949 the 164th Division arrived in Nanam under the command of Kim Ch'ang-dok, vice commander of the division. The 164th Division was reorganised into the 5th Division of the KPA. Kim Ch'ang-dok was appointed Commander of the 5th Division. In addition, another 2,000 Korean troops in the CCF arrived in North

Korea in August 1949. They were organised into the 603rd Motorcycle Regiment.⁵⁴

The Korean troops in the CCF divisions were seasoned soldiers through the anti-Japanese war and the Chinese Civil War. The origin of the 166th Division was Yi Hong-kwang unit, which was originated from the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA). The advance column of the KVA which failed to enter North Korea in November 1945, due to the denial of the Soviet occupation authorities in North Korea, moved to Tunhwa, southern Manchuria. By February 1946, the KVA column reached a strength of 8,000 men by recruiting Korean youths around there. From the spring of 1946 many cadre members of this unit were sent to North Korea by an agreement among the Soviet occupation authorities in North Korea, their North Korean protégés and Chinese communist leaders, to form the cadres of the Security Cadres Training Centres. The remaining members of the unit were organised into a Yi Hong-kwang unit named after a legendary hero in the anti-Japanese struggle in Manchuria in the early 1930s. (Yi Hong-kwang was one of the organisers of the North East People's Revolutionary Army (NEPRA), a forerunner of the North East Anti-Japanese United Army (NEAJUA). He was killed in action in May 1935 at the age of 26 years.) In February 1947, the Yi Hong-kwang unit was reorganised into the Independent 4th Division of the North East Democratic United Army, which was then under the command of Lin Piao. In June 1948 the Independent 4th Division was redesignated the 166th Division of the 56th Army Corps of the CCF. As of July 1949 when the division was about to move to North Korea, it was stationed in the Mukden area, southern Manchuria.⁵⁵ (By that time the Chinese Civil War was almost at an end.)

The origin of the 164th Division was different from the 166th Division. The 164th Division was originally the product of the CCF. Some of the Korean troops in the division were veterans in the anti-Japanese war; though, the majority of the Korean troops in the division were veterans of the Chinese Civil War. In July 1949 all non-Korean soldiers of the division were transferred to other CCF units and in their place the division received Korean soldiers from

other CCF units. When the division was transferred to North Korea in early August, the Korean soldiers of the division totalled 7,500 men. In addition to these veterans from the CCF, the 5th Division received an additional 3,500 KPA troops to conform to the force-level of the standard KPA division.⁵⁶

With the activation of the 5th and 6th Divisions, three existing divisions of the KPA, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Divisions, moved southwards. In June 1949, the 3rd Division in Wonsan area moved to P'yonggang area, Kwangwon Province. In July 1949 the 2nd Division stationed in Nanam area moved to Hamhung area, South Hamkyong Province. In September 1949 the 1st Division in Kaech'on moved to Namch'on area, Hwanghae Province. Thus, by late 1949, KPA divisions were deployed throughout North Korea as the following: the 1st Division in Hwanghae Province; the 2nd, in Kangwon Province; the 3rd, in South Hamkyong Province; the 5th, in North Hamkyong Province; and the 6th, in North P'yongan Province. In South P'yongan Province, the 4th Independent Mixed Brigade, which was to be elevated to the 4th Division in April 1950, was stationed. In October 1949, two tank regiments of the 105th Tank Brigade moved south; the 109th Tank Regiment to Namch'on, Hwanghae Province; and the 203rd Tank Regiment to Ch'orwon, Kangwon Province. (Until the 1st and 3rd Divisions and 109th and 203rd Tank Regiments were deployed the border area along the 38th parallel, covering Kangwon Province and Hwanghae Province, had been guarded by the 1st and 3rd Security Brigades under the Ministry of the Interior.) Thus, the arrival of the Korean troops in the CCF in mid-1949 served a moment for the overall adjustment of the deployment of the KPA divisions.⁵⁷

Kim IlSung and the KPA leadership, which was predominantly manned by Kim IlSung's faithful lieutenants and some Soviet-Koreans, took some ambivalent attitudes towards these Korean veterans from the CCF. The incorporation of these veterans into the KPA was a very effective and economic way of strengthening the KPA in a short time. However, the veterans had been developing their own identity in terms of origins, composition, combat skills and tactics, discipline, and

esprit de corps. Kim IlSung was seriously concerned over this matter. In a speech delivered to the officers of the 6th Division on 29 July 1949, Kim IlSung told them as follows:

You must not feel complacent just because you have a little combat experience nor should you relax in a peaceful mood, as you are back home.⁵⁸

You are hardened and experienced through battles. But you have no experience of regular army life. This you must learn from those comrades who have large service records in the People's Army. The soldiers who have served in the People's Army since its found-ation can be regarded as worthy of the name of a regular army in the main. So you had better learn humbly from them what you do not know.⁵⁹

The tone of Kim IlSung's speech was hardly considered to be free of some enmity towards the veterans who had not been fostered by him.

Owing to this attitude of the North Korean leadership, the influx of the Korean veterans from the CCF into the KPA did not alter the make-up of the high command of the KPA. Bang Ho-san and Kim Ch'ang-dok were to remain divisional commanders by September 1950. The political and military leaders of the Yen'an group such as Kim Tu-bong (the symbolic president of the 'republic'), Mu Chong (Deputy Defence Minister), or Kim Ung (Chief of the Combat Training Bureau), felt much affection for the Korean veterans from China. However, they were being circumscribed themselves by Kim IlSung and his followers at that time. So they could barely help the veterans but for moral support.⁶⁰ In short, the Chinese-affiliated Korean veterans were treated by Kim IlSung and his followers not as partners but as subsidiaries. Unlike the situation in late 1945 when the Soviet occupation authorities and its Korean protégés were under the apprehension that the influx of Chinese affiliated-Korean Volunteer Army troops into North Korea would hamper their dominance in North Korea, in late 1949, Kim IlSung and his followers were in firm control of the North Korean regime to the

extent of being able to manage a sizeable, seasoned force which was, in many points, alien to them.

The Pseudo-Warfare Between North and South Korea

From late 1948 to early 1950 tensions between North and South Korea were rapidly intensifying and frequently ruptured into open hostilities, precipitating a large-scale collision between the two sides in the not-so-distant future. These armed conflicts in this period can be grouped into two categories: first, guerrilla provocations inside South Korea conducted by south Korean communists; and secondly, collisions along the 38th parallel between North Korean security forces and South Korean army troops. In both categories the involvement of the (regular) KPA troops was cautiously limited to the minimal level, while the ROK army divisions were almost single-handedly engaged in meeting these challenges from both inside and outside. By late November 1949, conflicts along the 38th parallel reached a temporary lull, which lasted in an ominous mood, until June 1950. Guerrilla provocations by south Korean communists continued intermittently until March 1950. By that time most of the communist guerrillas were wiped out by ROK Army troops and in March 1950 the south Korean communists leadership staying in North Korea suddenly discontinued dispatching more guerrillas to South Korea. This move was received by South Korean officials as something very suspicious.⁶¹

Guerrilla provocations by south Korean communists against South Korean authorities (before August 1948, the USAMGIK) started after the 'October People's Strife' in October 1946 (according to the USAMGIK, the 'October Riot'). Some communists or left-wingers who escaped from the police of the military government infiltrated into mountainous areas of North Kyongsang Province and Kangwon Province and organised some 'field units.' After the '2.7 Save-the-Nation Struggle' in February 1948 which was intended to sabotage the UNTCOK, the South Korean Workers' Party (SKWP) set up a military department. Large scale armed struggle by south Korean communists started from the '4.3

Riot' which broke out in Cheju Island in April 1948. Under the instruction of the provincial party leadership of the SKWP, about 500 armed communists and 3,000 left-wing youths attacked police stations and government buildings all over the island on 3 April 1948. Fighting between rebels and government troops was to continue intermittently until May 1949.⁶²

In October 1948, just two months after the establishment of the ROK government, a large-scale mutiny broke out among ROK Army troops, agitated by south Korean communists. On 19 October 1948, some 40 communists in the 14th Regiment, which was about to embark for Cheju Island to reinforce the punitive force there, staged a coup and turned the regiment into a 'People's Liberation Army'. Officers who resisted were executed on the spot. Lieutenant Kim Chi-hoe, member of the Military Department of the SKWP, took command of the mutiny. (Kim Chi-hoe was a graduate of the 3rd class of the Korean Military Academy in 1947.) Altogether 3,000 troops joined or were forced into the mutiny. It was astonishing that so many ROK Army troops became at any rate involved in the mutiny. The fact was that during this period the ROK Army had become a sort of hotbed for south Korean communists. The USAMGIK which had fostered the Korean Constabulary, the forerunner of the ROK Army, failed to give due attention to the ideological backgrounds of the incoming recruits to the constabulary. As a bad result, many south Korean communists succeeded in infiltrating into the constabulary during 1946 to 1947. The mutiny of October 1948 was a drastic exposure of this communist infiltration into the ROK Army.⁶³

The mutiny soon spread to Yosu-Sunch'on area, southeastern part of South Cholla Province. The ROK government dispatched a punitive force of two brigades to quell the mutiny. The punitive force was commanded by Brigadier General Song Ho-song, Commander-in-Chief of the ROK Army. The great concern of the South Korean political and military leadership was on whether the mutiny would spread to other regiments of the army. Such a worst scenario did not materialise at that time. (However, such a worry was not ungrounded. In early November 1948, in the 6th Regiment stationed in Taegu, North Kyongsang Province, a

communist-led mutiny broke out although the mutiny did not develop on such a large scale as Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny. Even a regimental commander of the punitive forces participating in the Yosu-Sunch'on operation was later found to be guilty of collaborating with the leadership of the mutiny.) The government troops recovered Yosu-Sunch'on area by 27 October 1949, ten days after the mutiny broke out. According to the account of the ROK government, about 1,200 civilians and government officials were killed, 400 rebels were killed and 2,300 rebels were captured. About 1,000 rebels retreated to the Chiri Mountain area, which was to be the principal stronghold of the south Korean communist guerrillas for the following four years.⁶⁴

Alarmed by the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny and the subsequent mutiny in the 6th Regiment, the ROK government set out to thoroughly purge communist and pro-communist elements in the ROK Army. By July 1949 altogether 4,800 officers and soldiers were purged from the army. Considering that the total strength of the ROK Army as of May 1949 was about 70,000 men, the scale of the purge and its impacts upon the whole structure of the army were beyond description. Ironically, owing to this thorough purge of communist-affiliated elements from its rank-and-file, when the genuine war broke out in June 1950, the ROK Army leadership could have confidence in the loyalty of its troops. So, in a sense, for the ROK government and its army, the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny was a 'misfortune turned into a blessing'.⁶⁵

On the part of the SKWP leadership, the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny was an unwise adventure in terms of its overall consequence. It is true that the mutiny was a serious embarrassment to the ROK government. However, the ROK government was able to crush the mutiny within a short time. On the other hand, the mutiny came to expose secret organisations of the SKWP in the ROK Army, abruptly and absurdly. In fact, the mutiny was an isolated incident initiated by local members of the SKWP. It was not one which was centrally planned and coordinated by the highest leadership of the SKWP. (At the initial stage, the leader of the mutiny was Master Sergeant Chi Ch'ang-su, a local SKWP member. It was only after a while that Lt. Kim Chi-hoe

took the command of the mutiny after revealing his membership in the Military Department of the SKWP.) North Korean communists were even less affiliated with this mutiny. This is because Kim IlSung called the incident 'the Mutiny of the National Defence Army Unit,' unlike the 2.7 Save-the-Nation Struggle or the 4.3 People's Strife.⁶⁶

Encouraged by the unrest in the ROK Army, from November 1948 the communist leaders in North Korea stepped up guerrilla provocations in South Korea. The south Korean communist leadership was made the main agent of this new 'southern strategy'. The guerrilla provocations in South Korea from November 1948 to early 1950, led by the SKWP leadership, can be grouped into two categories in terms of the origins of these guerrilla fighters. One group was made of those who became 'mountain men' after such occasions as the 'October People's Strife' in 1946 or the '2.7 Save-the-Nation Struggle' and the '4.3 Cheju People's Strife', in early 1948, plus fugitives from the ROK Army after the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny and the 6th Regiment Mutiny. Among them elite communists were small in number. Many of them were simple dissidents agitated by communist ringleaders. Another group was made of those who were dispatched from North Korea to lead and augment the former group. Most of them were ardent, professional communists who defected to North Korea since late 1946. They received political and military training in the Kangdong Political Institute. (The Kangdong Political Institute was founded in Kangdong, near P'yongyang in mid-1947 to accommodate defectors from South Korea. The political institute was under direct control of Yi Sung-yop, a faithful lieutenant of Pak Hon-yong and, in fact, the power base of the SKWP leadership.) Thus, the composition of the guerilla fighters in South Korea before the Korean War was rather a mixed one.⁶⁷

By September 1949 three corps of the 'People's Guerrilla Forces' were organised. The 1st Corps, with a strength of 360 men, was operating in Odae Mountain area, Kangwon Province. Yi Ho-je was commander of the corps. He was once Superintendent of the Kangdong Political Institute. The 2nd Corps, with a strength of 500 men, was operating in Chiri Mountain area, South Cholla Province. The 2nd

Corps was commanded by Yi Hyon-sang, a veteran communist who had participated in communist activities from the early 1920s together with Pak Hon-yong. The 2nd Corps included most of the remaining rebels in the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny. The 3rd Corps, with 300 men, was commanded by Kim Dal-sam, leader of the '4.3 People's Strife' in Ch'eju Island in April 1948. The 3rd Corps was operating in Bohyon Mountain area, North Kyongsang Province.⁶⁸

The high tide of the guerrilla activities was the 'September Offensive' staged from July to September 1949. Responding to the Manifesto of the DFRF, produced on 28 June 1949, which called for nation-wide general elections to be held in September 1949 to form a unified Korean government, underground organisations and guerrilla units under the control of the SKWP leadership began to intensify armed struggle over all South Korea. During this offensive, more than 2600 encounters between communist guerrillas and ROK police and armed forces were reported, according to the claims of the SKWP leadership. About 4,000 South Korean armed persons were reportedly killed according to the claim.⁶⁹ The ROK government stepped up punitive operations against these guerrillas from late September 1949. The punitive operations lasted almost six months until March 1950. The guerrillas suffered unbearable defeat during this period. By March 1950 all but 300 survivors were wiped out by the ROK punitive forces. (The total strength of dispatched guerrillas from North Korea during November 1948 to March 1950 amounted to about 2,400 men in ten echelons). The loss of more than 2,000 crack communists in the armed struggle in South Korea from late 1948 to early 1950 was a severe blow to the SKWP leadership, considering their ever weakening position in the North Korean regime in this period.⁷⁰

The causes of the collapse of the guerrilla provocations were as follows. First of all, the communist guerrillas failed to gain the support of the people in the south. The bloodshed incurred by the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny in October 1948 alarmed most of the south Korean people on possible consequences of 'liberation' by communists. On the other hand the ROK government staged successful political and military

campaigns to wipe out the guerrillas. Many of ROK Army officers had experienced punitive operations against Korean and Chinese communist guerrillas in Manchuria before 1945 when they served in the Japanese Army or the Manchukuo Army. They were well aware of the principal rule in counter-insurgency operations - to cut off the rebels from the people. Chased by South Korean punitive troops, from October 1949, the guerrillas were forced to retreat to deep mountains. In terms of terrain such areas as could serve guerrillas sanctuary were not many in south Korea. The South Korean punitive troops encircled these guerrillas with overwhelming strength and launched attacks repeatedly until the guerrillas were wiped out. As of March 1950, some surviving guerrillas, no more than 300 men in all, almost ceased their activities and were to remain latent, mostly in Chiri Mountain area, until they re-emerged in the summer of 1950.⁷¹

Another major cause of the failure was the SKWP leadership stationed in the north. They were not well informed of the real state of guerrilla activities in the south. Communication between the leadership and guerrilla fighters in the south was poor and the leaders tended to exaggerate the 'achievements' of the guerrillas, partly out of wishful thinking, and partly out of their need to prove their usefulness in the North Korean regime. So the leadership often gave improper instructions to the guerrillas in the south, which eventually precipitated the collapse of the guerrilla activities. On the other hand North Korean communist leadership took an ambivalent position towards the guerrillas in the south. While taking the position that the armed struggle in the south was mainly the responsibility of the SKWP leadership, the North Korean communist leadership remained, somehow, impassive to the elimination of south Korean communist guerrillas. When the guerrillas were on the verge of extinction in the winter of 1949-50, the North Korean leadership neither altered their original Korean war plan to rescue the guerrillas nor gave substantial support to the SKWP leadership. The guerrillas were, in a sense, a victim of the enmity between the North and South Korean communist leadership.⁷²

Border conflicts along the 38th parallel started from early 1949. In January 1949, ROK Army troops were deployed along the border area in place of withdrawing US troops. Until this time, the 38th parallel was a demarcation line rather than a front-line between the north and south. The US troops had not established fortified positions along the parallel. They had installed only some sentry boxes and military barracks in the border area. North of the parallel, two security brigades under the Ministry of the Interior were deployed by February 1949. The North Korean security forces first assumed security missions from July 1947 in place of the withdrawing Soviet troops. The strength of these security forces remained rather modest at two-battalion level until mid-1948.⁷³

In August 1948, the 3rd Security Brigade was organised with four battalions and assumed security duty along the 38th parallel exclusively. In September 1948 the 3rd Security Brigade received two more battalions. In February 1949, the 1st Security Brigade moved to Kamsong, Kangwon Province, and assumed the security mission of the eastern half of the border area along the 38th parallel. The 3rd Security Brigade was to take charge of the rest, the western half of the border area. From late 1948 the security forces began to fortify their positions. By the time the ROK Army troops were deployed along the parallel in January 1949, the North Korean security forces had already established much more favourable defence positions than the ROK Army troops. Newly deployed ROK Army troops felt an urgent need to strengthen their positions to counter the North Korean security forces. Clashes between the two sides started, in most cases, from a competition to gain topographical superiority. And once started, the clashes were to develop often into reciprocal clashes.⁷⁴

Large scale clashes between the two sides started from May 1949. The clashes continued intermittently until November 1949. Major clashes during this period were as follows: the Kaesong area conflict in early May; the Ongjin area conflict from late May to late June, and in early August; the Yangyang area conflict in early July; and the

Ch'unchon area conflict in early August; the Ongjin area conflict in mid-October to mid-November. According to the account of the ROK Army, 874 clashes and conflicts involving squads and larger units broke out between the two sides in 1949.⁷⁵ On the other hand, North Korea claimed that the South Korean army and police forces made '2617 incursions' north of the 38th parallel.⁷⁶ By any account the scale of the 'small war' between North and South Korea in 1949 was obviously predicting a head-on collision between the two sides in the not-so-distant future.

It has been open to controversy which side was more to blame for the border conflicts in 1949. North Korea has claimed, since the Korean War, that the border conflicts were a prelude to the 'Northward Expedition' by the South Korean rulers - 'for occupation of North Korea by force of arms.' According to their claim:

The "US Military Advisory Group" and the South Korean rulers pursued the following aims in herding out the puppet army and police for armed intrusions into the areas north of the 38th parallel.⁷⁷

The first aim was to confirm whether the puppet army and police were "ready for action" and to increase their "combat capabilities."⁷⁸

The second aim was to cause social disorder and unrest in North Korea by setting fire to farm villages and houses and killing and kidnapping the innocent people in the areas north of the 38th parallel.⁷⁹

The third aim sought by the United States and the South Korean rulers in the armed intrusion was to reconnoitre the defence positions of the DPRK People's Security Forces and capture the tactical vantage points for their full-scale invasion in the future.⁸⁰

Geared to such aims, the armed intrusions of the US imperialists and the South Korean rulers were not mere limited conflicts of local character from the outset. They often developed into large-scale actions fraught with the danger of expanding into a total war.⁸¹

The core of the North Korean claim is that in early 1949, the South Korean government and its American supporters were preparing a 'northward expedition.' The following are the examples of such 'evidence' to establish this theory, produced by the official history of North Korea:

Referring to the tasks of the "ROK army" for 1949, Chae Byong Dok, Chief of the General Staff of the "ROK army", blared out: "In the New Year we will take practical action to restore the lost territory and unify the homeland."⁸² [In fact, Chae Byong-dok was not Chief of Staff of the ROK army at that time, but Brigadier Yi Ung-jun was.]

Chang Taek Sang, Foreign Minister of the puppet government, ..., said: "The ROK government will not hesitate to take military action against the north in order to recover the usurped territory."⁸³

... On 9 March, 1945, Yun Chi Yong, Home Minister of the puppet government, remarked: "The only way of reunifying North and South Korea is for the ROK to restore the lost territory, North Korea, by force." He openly disclosed that they regarded the "march-north unification" as one and the only way of reunification and had the intention to realize it.⁸⁴

These remarks by South Korean leaders were real. However, how to interpret this 'evidence' in the context of the then domestic and international situation of the ROK government requires great caution. In spite of frequent appeals of the South Korean political and

military leaders for 'Northward Expedition', it is very doubtful whether they were seriously contemplating a 'northward expedition' at that stage. Rather it seems that the cry for 'northward expedition' was in fact intended to serve certain political needs of South Korean leaders in this period. In the aftermath of the Yosu-Sunch'on Mutiny and subsequent great purge in the army, there was, understandably, a strong need for building up the shaken morale and prestige of the army. There was also a strong mood among the military leaders that the North Korean regime was the prime mover of such a vortex and therefore should be punished. It is most likely that the 'northward expedition' campaign was reflecting such a need and mood among the South Korean political and military leaders.⁸⁵

As tangible evidence to establish the theory that the 'northward expedition' campaign was in nature a 'policy of bluff', it is helpful to examine the financial situation of the ROK government and its military capability at that time. Financially, in early 1949, the subsistence of the ROK government itself was at stake. The national budget for the year 1949 contained a deficit of 40.5 per cent of the total amount of settlement. Expenditure for defence and security accounted for 47 per cent of the total expenditure.⁸⁶ A North Korean account claimed that 'this clearly shows that the South Korean rulers went to extremes in armament expansion.'⁸⁷ The fact was that, the ROK government could barely sustain its defence and police forces, even with such a high portion allotted for defence and security. As of March 1949, the 65,000 men ROK Army had the weaponry and equipment prepared for a 50,000 man army, since another 15,000 men exceeded the ceiling agreed upon between the ROK and US governments.⁸⁸ As such, South Korea at that time was not in a position to plan an expedition.

It is suggestive that at that time the North Korean leadership, in fact, minimised the 'northward expedition' campaign and did not take the 'threat' from the south seriously, saying:

Some of the South Korean quislings call for a fratricidal war, clamouring for a 'northern expedition' like a puppy who

is not afraid of a tiger (emphasis by author, a Korean proverb).⁸⁹

It seems they do not comprehend what the 'northern expedition' would bring them. ... If the pro-Japanese elements, traitors to the nation and other reactionaries dare to conduct a 'northern expedition' they will be completely annihilated by the united and awakened Korean people and their armed forces.⁹⁰

During 22 February 1949 to 7 April 1949, Kim IlSung and six other members of the North Korean cabinet were visiting the Soviet Union while the 'northward expedition' campaign was allegedly intensifying in the south. The security forces along the 38th parallel were not exchanged for or augmented by KPA divisions. Two KPA divisions and two tank regiments were placed behind the security brigades but they were not involved in the fighting with ROK divisions throughout the whole border conflicts period. It is noteworthy that the North Korean claim, that the border conflicts in 1949, 'challenged by South Korea' was a part of the well-mapped out war plan by South Korea and the United States, was put forward mainly after the situation of the Korean War deteriorated. As of early 1949 the North Korean leadership did not take the northward expedition campaign seriously.⁹¹

Due to the fact that the South Korean leadership had not genuinely considered a northward expedition in those days and the North Korean leadership was actually ignoring the South Korean campaign as a 'policy of bluff,' border conflicts had remained limited throughout 1949 though they often ruptured into conflicts involving regimental size units on both sides. Certainly as of early 1949 neither side anticipated an all-out war between the north and the south in the immediate future (say, in a couple of months) and until late 1949 neither of them was prepared to launch such a war, or had confidence in its preparation for such an adventure. But enmity between the two sides, especially among troops deployed along the 38th parallel was so deep that open hostilities were almost inevitable. The small war

along the 38th parallel during 1949 was a kind of limited war in these circumstances. It would be an exaggeration to say that either or both the North and South Korean leadership pursued a well-conceived limited war strategy or they had developed a good mechanism of crisis management between them. However, in terms of consequence, the border conflicts remained limited until the lull at the end of 1949.⁹²

Within the context of a limited war, the border conflicts in 1949 were conducted mainly by local commanders on both sides. The political leaderships or higher military leaderships of both sides were not often directly involved in the conduct of this 'small' war. In these circumstances, local commanders of both sides along the 38th parallel were given wide range of freedom of action. Many of the ROK Army commanders were ex-officers in the Japanese Army or the Manchukuo Army which emphasised bold initiative of local commanders. They had the inclination to underestimate North Korean troops, recollecting their experiences in the punitive operations against 'communist bands' in Manchuria. The famous vouching by Brigadier General Kim Sok-won, an ex-colonel in the Japanese Army renowned for his bravery, was a typical example of this kind. He said that 'If order is given to us, we can have lunch in P'yongyang and dinner in Sinuiju, (a border city between North Korea and Manchuria.)'⁹³ On the other hand, North Korean commanders of the Security Brigades were no lesser men than ROK commanders. Ch'oe Hyon's toughness had been legendary since the early 1930's. The small war between the north and the south in 1949 should be understood in the context of taking into consideration this unusually wide range of freedom of action given to local commanders of both sides and the bitter enmity between them.

From late 1948 to early 1950 a state of pseudo-war between North Korea and South Korea continued, in the form of guerrilla provocations inside South Korea and border conflicts along the 38th parallel. Through this pseudo-war, the ROK Army was much shaken and attrited while the KPA was left to remain intact. It affected the ROK army in two ways: first, it reduced the readiness of the ROK Army by cutting

down on training and using up scarce supplies; and secondly and no less significantly, the South Korean political and military leaders got conceited, to some extent, by the successes they brought in quelling the guerrilla provocations and in confining the border conflicts. The latter point is worthy of more consideration in analysing the poor performance of the ROK Army in the initial phase of the Korean War.⁹⁴

The Last Preparations for the War

Another expansion of the KPA which was to strengthen it to a war footing began from December 1949. In December 1949, a Naval Headquarters was established. Han Il-mu, a Soviet-Korean was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the North Korean Navy. The North Korean Navy was not an independent service and the commander-in-chief of the navy was equivalent to an army corps commander in rank. (North Korea has not adopted a tri-service system since.) Under its command, the Naval Headquarters had three regional garrison commands, the Naval Academy, and the Naval Training Centre. The North Korean Navy had a small flotilla of 35 vessels, totalling 5,500 tonnage. All but 4 torpedo boats were small patrol crafts and transportation ships. The four torpedo boats introduced from the Soviet Union in December 1949 were, in effect, the main attack force of the North Korean Navy. Therefore the North Korean Navy could hardly be called a 'navy' in the accepted use of the word.⁹⁵

The bulk of the North Korean Navy in this period were infantry battalions deployed along the coast line. The total strength of the navy in December 1949 was about 15,000 men, out of which more than 80 per cent were infantry or coast artillery troops. The 1st Garrison Command in Ch'ongjin had about 4,000 men; the 2nd, in Wonsan had about 4,800 men and the 3rd, in Chinnampo, about 5,000 men. Those 13,000 men were, in fact, soldiers or marines rather than sailors. They were formerly in the coast guard battalions under the Ministry of the Interior. Their equipment and mission were almost identical with

those of other security forces under the Ministry of the Interior, such as the 38th Parallel Security Brigades, or the Railway Security Brigade. With the beginning of the Korean War the small 'fleet' of the North Korean Navy was soon wiped out by the UN naval forces. Following this development, the naval forces under Han Il-mu were transformed into KPA divisions and brigades. This extraordinary arrangement shows clearly the limited nature of the North Korean Navy in this period. However, when the Naval Headquarters was established in December 1949, it was intended to be a step forward in the preparation for the war.⁹⁶

At the same time (December 1949) an air division was organised, by enlarging the Air Regiment which had been in training state since January 1949. (The origin of the Air Regiment was the Air Company which was organised in June 1946 under the P'yongyang Institute.) Wang Yon, formerly Commander of the Air Regiment, was appointed commander of the division. The Air Division comprised a fighter regiment; a ground-attack regiment, a training regiment, and a logistics group. The strength of the Air Division totalled about 2,000 men. Despite the impressive title, the Air Division was, as of December 1949, still a ground-bound air force, with about 40 aircraft. The Air Division was to be fully-operational only just before the beginning of the war. In April 1950, the Soviet Union supplied about 60 aircraft. In mid-June 1950, an additional 60 aircraft arrived in North Korea by Soviet pilots. On the day the war began the North Korean Air Division possessed 62 Il-10 aircraft, 70 Yak-3 and Yak-7B fighters, 22 Yak-16 transports, and 8 PO-2 trainers. The Ilyushin and Yakovlev aircraft were obsolete in a jet air age, but they were good conventional aircraft. Most of the 132 combat planes were based at the two airfields near P'yongyang and the airfield at Yonpo near Hungnam. In addition, the airfield at Wonsan was available. Advanced airstrips near the 38th parallel at Sinmak, P'yonggang, Kumchon, and Kansong also became operational by the time the war began.⁹⁷

It is worthwhile to note that while the Air Division was organised in December 1949, it was only in April 1950 that the Soviet government

supplied aircraft for operational use to the Air Division. There is, of course, no doubt that the Air Division was organised with the prospect of receiving such aircraft soon. Also there could have been some need for further improving the capability of the Air Division until it could operate the aircraft for themselves. However, the late supply of Soviet aircraft could also be interpreted in another context in that the Soviet government was very cautious in building a sizable North Korean air force. In the Moscow meeting of December 1948 for preparing a KPA expansion programme, the Soviet Defence Ministry officials had decided that 'a (North Korean) air force shall not be established for the time being, taking into consideration international problems.'⁹⁸ Conceding that the building of an air force is more time-taking than training infantry troops, the development of the North Korean Air Force had been considerably slow until December 1949, or more strictly speaking, until the spring of 1950. It is an evidence indicating some reservation in the Soviet policy and programmes in expanding the KPA before the Korean War.

Unlike the Naval Headquarters which had the status equivalent to an army corps, the Air Division was equivalent to an army division. (The North Korean Air Force was elevated to the Air Force Headquarters status in 1951.) When the war began, the Air Division was expected to destroy the meager ROK Air Force easily and then materially assist the KPA divisions as they moved into South Korea. In reality, the Air Division was swiftly wiped out by the US Air Force in just two weeks. So in terms of consequence the Air Division contributed little to the course of the war. However, as in the case of the establishment of the Naval Headquarters, the forming of the Air Division in December 1949 was, from North Korean leaders' standpoint, a big step forward in the preparation for the war. The significance of the organisation of the Air Division should be considered in this context rather than its actual effect on the war.⁹⁹

In mid-March 1950 three Democratic Youth Training Centres were organised with the recruits from the Democratic Youth Training Camps which had been organised since October 1949.¹⁰⁰ The 1st training

centre was organised in Sinuiju with the personnel of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Democratic Youth Training Camps deployed in North P'yongan Province. Yi Yik-song, a Yenian Korean, was appointed commander of the training centre. The 2nd training centre was activated in Sukch'on from the 4th, 5th and 6th Democratic Youth Training Camps scattered in South P'yongan Province. Ch'oe Yong-jin, a member of the Kim IlSung group, was appointed commander of the training centre. The 3rd training centre was formed in Hoeryong around the personnel from the 7th, 8th and 9th Democratic Youth Training Camp stationed in North Hamkyong Province. Pak Song-ch'ol, from the Kim IlSung group, was appointed commander of the training centre. These three Democratic Youth Training Centres were, in all but name, reserve divisions of the KPA. Each training centre was composed of three infantry regiments plus its own artillery and support troops.¹⁰¹

The combat capability and missions of these three reserve divisions, at the beginning of the Korean war, has been largely misunderstood and, in many cases exaggerated. One controversy is over their designation itself. Many official histories produced in the West maintained that the three training centres were designated divisions of the KPA as early as March 1950. This is not true. According to convincing evidence, these training centres were not designated 'divisions' at least until 13 June 1950. An instruction issued by Mu Chong, Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of Artillery, to the KPA divisions on that date (13 June) clearly referred to these training centres as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Democratic Youth Training Centres.¹⁰² These training centres were designated divisions of the KPA at around 18 June 1950, just a week before the war. Thus, the 1st training centre was designated the 13th Division. The 2nd training centre became the 10th Division. And the 3rd training centre was renamed the 15th Division.¹⁰³

The fact that the three training centres were designated 'divisions' only in late June 1950 suggests meaningful implications on the training standard, combat capability and missions of these troops. An indication is that the newly elevated divisions were not earmarked

to form the first-line shock divisions in the invasion. They were mainly to perform security missions in the liberated areas, following the shock divisions. In other words, they were a kind of 'national guard' divisions rather than regular divisions. According to training programmes issued in late-march 1950 to subordinate units in each training centre, they were to finish basic training by the end of August 1950. The five-month training programme was divided into two stages: the first stage ranging from 1 April to 15 June 1950; and the second stage ranging from 16 June to 31 August 1950. Judging from the subjects and standards of the training programme the training centres were, as of late March 1950, in the initial stage of unit formation. They were in the same stage at that time as the 1st and 2nd Divisions during the latter half of 1946 when the Security Cadres Training Centres were being transformed into divisions of the people's army.¹⁰⁴

In late May 1950, the KPA divisions were ordered to prepare for coming 'summer combat training' which was to begin from 1 June and to end by 15 July 1950.¹⁰⁵ (It is noteworthy that 15 July was in just twenty days after the invasion date of 25 June. This is a crucial hint implying how the North Korean leaders and the Soviet operation team were contemplating the prospect of the Korean War.) However, according to another training programme issued to the three training centres in late May 1950, the same time, the training centres were to finish the 'summer combat training' during the period from 1 June to 15 August 1950. Compared with the one issued to these training centres in late March 1950, the programme of late May made little alteration. The point is that the training centres were to continue the summer training until mid-August 1950, one month after the existing divisions were to accomplish the 'summer combat training' scheme, a code name for the invasion in June 1950. Thus, the training centres turned divisions were not anticipated to be urgently needed in the conduct of the invasion.¹⁰⁶

In mid-July 1950 with the situation of the invasion worsening due to the intervention of the UN Forces and the surprisingly good performance of the ROK divisions after they had recovered from the

initial setback, the 13th and the 15th Divisions of the KPA were put forward as first line divisions. But their performance was generally poor. On 21 July 1950 an entire regiment of the 15th Division was annihilated by the 17th ROK Regiment. Due to this defeat Pak Song-ch'ol, Commander of the 15th Division was fired. The 10th Division left for the front on 27 July 1950, a month after the war began, and took part in the August Offensive from 12 August 1950. The late participation and generally poor performance of these three divisions were, in a sense, natural when one thinks of the origins and missions initially expected of them. In short, those three divisions were not seriously considered a core requirement for the Korean War, to the same extent as the seven crack infantry divisions. This is a good clue to the proper understanding of the initial war plan of North Korea.¹⁰⁷

Together with the activation of the three Democratic Youth Training Centres, in mid-March 1950, some changes in the organisation and deployment of the existing divisions were made. The 1st Regiment of the 1st Division in Namch'on area was exchanged for the 14th Regiment, the 6th Division, in order to provide the 1st Division with combat experienced soldiers from the Chinese Civil War. The 4th Independent Mixed Brigade in Chinnampo, near P'yongyang, was elevated to the 4th Division. Lee Kwon-mu, a Yenan Korean, was appointed commander of the division. The 6th Division moved to Chaeryong area, Hwanghae Province. So by the end of March 1950, three KPA divisions were deployed about 30kms north of the 38th parallel; the 1st Division in Namch'on, the 3rd Division in P'yonggang, and the 6th Division in Chaeryong area.¹⁰⁸

Along the 38th parallel, three Security Brigades under the Ministry of the Interior were deployed; the 1st Security Brigade in eastern sector headquartered in Kansong; the 7th Security Brigade in central sector headquartered in Sibyonri; and the 3rd Security Brigade in western sector, with its headquarters in Chukch'on. The total strength of the security brigades along the 38th parallel was 13,000 men. Along the Korean-Manchuria border the 2nd Border Security

Brigade was deployed with about 2,600 men in six battalions. The 5th Railroad Security Brigade, with a strength of about 3,000 men, had headquarters in P'yongyang. In addition to its own responsibility for railroad security, it also functioned as a general reserve force for the KPA and security brigades. Along the east and west coasts troops, around 13,000 men, under the Naval Headquarters, were deployed to guard important naval installations and the coast line.¹⁰⁹

In mid-April 1950 a division strength of Korean veterans from the PLA arrived in North Korea to form the 7th Division of the KPA. (The Chinese Communist forces were designated the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in October 1949 with the founding of the People's Republic of China.) The repatriation of these Korean veterans in April 1950 needs to be differentiated from that of the 164th and 166th CCF Divisions in July to August 1949. The repatriation of mid-1949 was part of the KPA expansion programme agreed upon among the Soviet Union, North Korea, and the CCP in January 1949. The release of those Korean soldiers in the 164th and 166th Divisions was made possible since, in Manchuria where the two divisions had been fighting, the Chinese Civil War was already over by early 1949. So, for the CCP leadership, there was no more urgent need to keep those all-Korean divisions. Anticipating an easy victory over the Kuomintang in the near future, they did not have to use the all-Korean divisions in battles in China proper. But the case of the Korean veterans who arrived in North Korea in April 1950 was different. By the time they were ordered to move to North Korea in March 1950, most of them had been engaged in the clearing operations in south China. (The PLA occupied Hainan Island in April 1950.) So the repatriation of these Korean troops who were scattered in the PLA divisions was not without problems. Therefore, it is possible to assume that North Korea wanted the Korean troops, an estimated strength of 12,000 men, more than the PRC in early 1950.¹¹⁰

Throughout February and March 1950 Korean soldiers in the PLA divisions streamed into Chongchou, Honan Province in southern China. Those Korean soldiers were drawn largely from the 139th, 140th, 141st and 156th PLA Divisions. On 6 April 1950 the Korean soldiers were

organised into the 15th Independent Division and began to move to North Korea. On 18 April, the division under the command of Chon U arrived in Wonsan, South Hamkyong Province. On 25 April the 15th Division was reconstituted as the 7th Division of the KPA. Chon U was appointed commander of the division. (The 7th Division was redesignated the 12th Division just before the beginning of the Korean War.) With the activation of the 7th Division, the crack soldiers hardened through the Chinese Civil War amounted to three divisions in the KPA, the 5th, 6th and 7th Divisions.¹¹¹

In mid-April 1950, a large shipment of war materiel arrived in North Korea from Vladivostock. The war materiel included the following: 100 tanks, 60 self-propelled-guns,; fire arms, mortars, howitzers, anti-aircraft guns, and anti-tank guns; ammunition, spare parts, medicines, signal and engineer equipment, and oil. Out of 100 tanks, 30 tanks were to form an independent tank regiment for use on the eastern front. (In the western front the 105th Tank Brigade with three tank regiments were to support shock divisions.) Another 70 tanks were to make up for the loss of tanks in the war. The 60 self-propelled guns were to be assigned to infantry divisions. Each KPA division was to have 12 self-propelled guns. Fire arms and other fire support armaments were mainly to equip the veteran troops from the CCP, the 5th Division and the 7th (later 12th) Divisions. (The 6th Division turned in its vintage equipment in September 1949 and was equipped with Soviet arms at the same time.) Other materiel such as ammunition and oil were for all the KPA divisions in the conduct of the invasion. The influx of this war materiel in April 1950 from the Soviet Union was unprecedented in its scale and, more than anything else, vivid evidence of the coming of a war in Korea in the near future.¹¹²

It is important in the context of the Korean War question to establish whether the war materiel poured into North Korea in April 1950 was Soviet aid or North Korean purchase. Primary source materials to solve this question are yet to be found. However, judging from some circumstantial evidence, it is almost certain that

this Soviet war materiel was not without charge, whether credit or cash or barter. Throughout the year 1949, Kim IlSung was repeatedly emphasising that 'the execution of the Two-Year National Economic Plan is material guarantee for national reunification'¹¹³ and he repeatedly reminded the KPA soldiers of the fact that the arms and equipment were not gained for free but bought at the expense of the people, as follows:

All the equipment and material including the aeroplanes which are at your disposal now, have been obtained at the cost of precious blood shed by the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters and at the expense of our people's sweat and blood.¹¹⁴

Circumstantial evidence implying that the Soviet war materiel was not free of charge is a North Korean charge against the Soviet leadership during the hostile relations between the two sides in the period 1963 to 1964. In September 1964 the North Korean leadership openly charged the Soviet Union with economic imperialism as follows;

You furnished us with equipment.... and other materials at prices much higher than the world market prices and took away from us scores of tons of gold and quantities of valuable non-ferrous metals and raw materials at prices much lower than the world-market prices. Would it not be a reasonable attitude, when you talk about your 'aid' to us, to mention also that you took valuable materials produced by our people through arduous labour in the most difficult days of our life?¹¹⁵

A case study prepared by US State Department in 1951, on the Soviet control of North Korea in the occupation period also presents suggestive information. According to that information:

In accordance with a Soviet North-Korean agreement of April 1947, the management and operation of the Wonsan oil refinery

and the sale of its petroleum output in Korea and abroad were turned over to the Wonsan Petroleum Company, a joint company owned in equal share by Soviet and North Korean government agencies.... According to the articles of agreement, "the USSR received a half interest in the company... in payment "for the expense incurred in the development of North Korean industries and transportation facilities and as repayment of credits extended by the Soviet Army up to August 15, 1946." Since any repairs made or credits extended by the Soviet Army were financed with North Korean currency issued by the Soviet Army, the USSR in fact paid nothing for its share in the company. Crude oil processed by the refinery was to be imported from Sakhalin "at world market prices" and the North Korean government, not the company, guaranteed payment for those oil imports through deliveries of Korean commodities of equal value."¹¹⁶

It is hardly imaginable that, considering such practices of the Soviet Union in dealings with North Korea in these years, Stalin was generous enough to offer the huge war materiel of April 1950 as 'aid'.

That North Korea acquired the war material by its 'sweat and blood' is also suggested by the prodigious campaign in late 1949 through a Fatherland Defense Support Association (FDSA) to solicit contributions to purchase arms. The FDSA was organised in July 1949 with a view to performing two functions. On the one hand, the FDSA was a DOSAAF organisation patterned after the (Soviet) Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet. Under the aegis of the FDSA part-time military training was made compulsory for all men between the ages of 17 and 40. By the end of August 1949 the FDSA had a membership strength of 2.7 million. (The populace of North Korea in 1949 was about 10 million.) On the other hand, the FDSA staged a wide campaign to support the KPA morally and materially. The campaign to raise the money necessary to buy 'aeroplanes, tanks, and naval crafts' was rapidly upgraded by Kim IlSung's instruction on 12 October 1949. By the end of December 1949, a total 280 million won

was raised 'voluntarily' for this purpose.¹¹⁷ (The basic salary for a Colonel in the KPA was, in 1949, 3500 won. So that 280 million won approximates to 100 million US dollars at late 1980s rate.) Though it is admissible that the donated sum was not merely a token, it was not a big money either. (The total government expenditure of North Korea in 1950 was planned at a level of 26.9 billion won. So the size of the donated money equalled about one percent of the total government expenditure.)¹¹⁸

Then, where did the bulk of the money for buying the war materiel come from? Some suggestion can be attained from examining the 1950 government budget of North Korea. As in other communist countries, the government expenditure of North Korea consisted mainly of three big items; expenditure on the economy; expenditure for cultural and social services; and defence expenditure. On the whole these three items account for about 98 per cent of the total. Some portion of defence expenditure in communist countries is concealed in other items out of need for secrecy or due to characteristic features of socialist economies. However, this does not necessarily bar a grasp of general 'trends' in defence spending in communist countries.¹¹⁹ During the years 1947-1950 the estimated defence expenditure of North Korea was as follows.¹²⁰

Year	Expenditures (in billion won)		
	Total (A)	Defence (B)	Percent (B\A)
1947	7.1	3.3	46 %
1948	13.1	5.4	41 %
1949*	19.6	7.1	36 %
1950*	26.7	6.4	24 %

* planned or budgeted

Curiously between 1949 and 1950 the defence budget dropped sharply as a percentage of the total from 36 per cent to 24 per cent, a 12 per cent decrease, even shrinking the amount from 7.1 billion won to 6.4 billion won. From a common sense point of view, the defence budget should have increased greatly in this period, reflecting the huge

amount of money which should have been earmarked for buying war materiel.

Contrastingly, the portion of expenditure on the economy increased sharply during 1949 to 1950 as in the following table:¹²¹

Year	Expenditures (in billion won)		
	Total (A)	Economy (B)	Percent (B\A)
1947	7.1	2.7	38 %
1948	13.1	5.1	39 %
1949*	19.6	8.3	42 %
1950*	26.7	14.2	53 %

* planned or budgeted

In the 1950 budget the planned expenditure on the economy accounted for more than half the total government expenditure. The portion of this item increased sharply from 42 per cent to 53 per cent between 1949 and 1950. The 12 per cent decrease in the defence expenditure and the 11 per cent increase in the expenditure on the economy between 1949 and 1950, combined, imply the following: first, during the 1949-1950 period, the major point of the North Korean leadership in planning the budget was how to achieve the Two-Year National Economic Plan successfully; and secondly, the expense for buying the war material came from mainly other sources than the defence expenditure of North Korea.

Then what other sources could have been available for the North Korean government? It is already suggested that the money solicited from the people through the FDSA campaign could not be a major source. The only alternative source left was, then, aid or credit from foreign sources - the Soviet government in this case. The possibility of generous Soviet aid is all but refuted in the preceding discussion. Then the only possibility is 'credit' from the Soviet government. During Kim IlSung's Moscow visit in March 1949, the Soviet government consented to offer 'a three-year 212 million rouble loan' to North

Korea in instalments from July 1949 to June 1952. The loan was for settling an 'excess of imports' from the Soviet Union. It is possible to assume that the 'excess of imports' could mean Soviet war materiel in case of need. Stalin's approval of Kim IlSung's initiative on a Korean war would have been solicited, among other things, to use the Soviet loan for buying war materiel.¹²² It is almost likely that the Soviet loan accounted for the lion's share in the expenses paid for the war materiel poured into North Korea in the spring of 1950. The commitment of the Soviet government to the preparation of the Korean War should be examined in this context, too. Nominally the Soviet government sold, not granted, the war materiel to North Korea, even though 'on credit'. The North Korean government bought the war materiel at 'world market price' with their 'sweat and blood', even though 'on credit'. If the Soviet government had not approved the use of the Soviet loan for buying the war materiel, the rapid expansion of the KPA in the spring of 1950 would not have been possible.

In mid-April 1949⁵⁰ a new team of Soviet military advisers arrived in P'yongyang replacing the Soviet military advisory group under Major-General Smirnov. The new team was composed of a dozen high ranking officers headed by Lieutenant-General Vasiliev, a Hero of the Soviet Union. If the old team was mainly for raising the KPA, the new team was for employing the KPA in the war. The operational planning of the Korean War was entrusted to them. Only a couple of high ranking officers in the KPA GHQ liaised with the Soviet operation team.¹²³ There is a claim that the Soviet operation team was actually the supreme command of the KPA in the planning and conduct of the war, vindicating the theory that the Soviet government was the prime mover of the Korean War.¹²⁴ A central theme of this thesis is that even though there is no denying that the Soviet government was deeply committed to the Korean War in various ways, it was not the prime mover of the war. From this point of view, my argument is that the Soviet operation team was a kind of technical assistance to the high command of the KPA rendered by the Soviet government. The KPA leaders of the time had, in fact, been captains and lieutenants in a special force of the Soviet Army, only five years previously. Now they were

to conduct an all-out war employing a modern army of more than 100,000 men. Though tough and bold, they had no experience in this kind of huge enterprise. The Soviet operation team was to fill in this deficiency in the KPA leadership. (When the war situation began to worsen from early July 1950 the Soviet operation team was ordered to evacuate from North Korea immediately. This shows the limited nature of Soviet contribution or commitment to the Korean War).¹²⁵

By the end of May 1950, the KPA finally reached a strength necessary for launching a war against South Korea with convincing superiority. The great leap of the KPA was achieved mostly during the period from March to May 1950. In estimating how much the KPA was strengthened during this period, the following table is informative. For convenience's sake major ground units of the KPA are considered, in the first place. An infantry division is given the value of '1'. The crack divisions formed around the veterans from the CCF are given the value of '1.5'. Independent mixed brigades and tank regiments are given the value of '0.5'. The 105th Tank Brigade was actually a tank division equivalent, so it is given the value of '1.5'. Three reserve divisions are given the value of '0.5' each.

Period	Unit	Combat Value Each	Cumulative Sum	Aggregate
48.1	1st Div.	1.0		
	2nd Div	1.0		
to	3rd Div	1.0	4.0	<u>4.0</u>
	4th Brig.	0.5		
49.4	105th Tank Regt	0.5		
49.5	5th Div.	1.5		
to	6th Div.	1.5	4.0	<u>8.0</u>
50.2	105th Tank Brig(+)	1.0		
50.3	Ind. Tank Regt.	0.5		
	4th Div(+)	0.5		
to	7th Div.	1.5	4.0	<u>12.0</u>
50.5	3 Reserve Divs	1.5		

To see the whole picture of the expansion of the KPA during this period the following other factors should be considered as well; the Air Division which became operational in April 1950; a regiment strength special force and two regiment strength marine troops organised in May 1950; and vast quantities of war materiel introduced in April 1950. Taking these factors into account, the KPA actually doubled its strength during March to May 1950. In other words, the KPA at the beginning of the Korean War was almost two times as strong as the force-level which had been planned by the Soviet Defence Ministry in December 1948. This is significant evidence indicating that at least as of late 1948, a Korean war project was not in its planning stage, even though it might have been contemplated as a possible option in the future. The quantum leap of the KPA, especially since March 1950, evidences that a major policy initiative had been taken among the communist leaders in the not-too-distant past before March 1950.

It is the contention of this author that circa February 1950 was the time when a 'Directive 21' (cf. Introduction p.12) was issued to the KPA, ordering preparations for a war with South Korea in the near future. This reasoning is the focal point in this thesis on the question of the Korean War decision, its timing and strategic calculation. That the Korean War decision was being made among the communist leaders during the winter of 1949-50 accords with much circumstantial evidence on this issue such as: Mao Tse-tung's Moscow visit during the same period; Acheson's statement on 12 January on the limitations of US defence commitment to South Korea; or Khrushchev's remarks on this issue. Seen from this point of view theories emphasising the political turmoil of the Rhee government in May 1950 or the South Korean failure to correspond to the North Korean proposals on the reunification issue, of early June, lose much ground. In analysing the strategic calculations of the communist leaders regarding the Korean War decision, the crucial point is the winter of 1949-50.

CHAPTER SIX

TRIALS OF THE WAR: 1950.6-1950.12

North Korea started the invasion of South Korea anticipating an easy victory. This complacency remained in the North Korean conduct of the war for some weeks even after the nature of the war had been totally changed with the coming of the US forces into Korea. That complacency resulted in an incomplete breakthrough in the first days of the invasion, allowing the battered ROK troops time and place for recovery. The attrited advance of the KPA troops in July 1950 was another indication that the KPA leadership was not swift and flexible enough in adapting its strategy and tactics to the new situation which was becoming more unfavorable to them day-by-day. The complacency in the initial war plan and the unadaptability of the KPA leadership to the new situation of the war was, no less than the political misjudgment of not predicting the US intervention, responsible for the KPA failure in the initial phase of the war.

On the other hand it is noteworthy to see that the seemingly crumbling retreat of the KPA troops in late September 1950 was not an abandonment of the war. As early as 27 September Kim IlSung was already confidently predicting that the retreat would not last long, a month or month and a half at the most. The various measures which the North Korean leadership took by mid-October 1950 should be considered in connection with this prospect of the war envisaged by the North Korean leadership. By the end of 1950 the KPA had experienced a full cycle of ups and downs, victory and defeat, glory and misery. The six months' trial during June and December 1950 offered the North Korean leadership a stimulus for the Koreanisation of KPA strategy and tactics. That the KPA possesses the largest special forces in the world nowadays - some 100,000 men - is a reflection of this Korean War experience.

The Complacent War Plan

The North Korean leadership anticipated an easy victory in the war. The following episode is suggestive of the atmosphere of the North Korean leadership in June 1950. At the meeting on 10 June, which gave instructions for the commencement of troop movement, Kim Kwang-hyop, Chief of the Operations Bureau reportedly told high-ranking officers as follows:

Troops of our People's Army have thus far experienced combat exercise up to the division level. This time, we are going to conduct task force operations, mobilizing all combat divisions. In this exercise, all the firearms held by our troops, not to speak of all basic units, will be mobilized. In the past, there have been some faults found with commanding officers from time to time in the course of exercises. This time, all the officers and men are urged to do their best to complete the operational exercise successfully. This exercise may take a little longer than in the past. But I am sure two weeks would be more than enough to finish it up. (emphasis by author) No need for anyone of you to carry any heavy loads, and you have only to prepare a bag to carry necessary maps or documents during the period of the exercise.¹

It is significant that Kim Kwang-hyop affirmed with such confidence that 'two weeks' would be more than enough to finish the invasion. Some more instances of this kind are:

A certain Lieutenant-Colonel of the communications department reportedly said in the course of the move that he heard 'Seoul will fall in two days in this operation.'²

Another Major of the reconnaissance department even uttered: "I heard that a review of troops this year will be held in Seoul on the 15 August anniversary of liberation. Anyway,

this year is the year for the reunification of our fatherland.³

Judging from various source materials, including such primary sources as the file of the operation orders issued by the General Staff, it is possible to conclude that the North Korean leadership envisaged and planned a three-week war. They confidently believed that major operations would be over within two weeks from the commencement of the war.

Then, on what grounds did they anticipate such an easy victory? To answer this question it is necessary to look into the initial war plan of the invasion. Judging from the mobilisation schedule of the KPA for the invasion, it is possible to draw a conclusion that at least by mid-May 1950, the Soviet operation team and the KPA leadership sorted out the war plan of the invasion. The Soviet operation team arrived in North Korea in mid-April 1950. It means that the invasion plan was based on such estimates and considerations as were available as of May 1950, on the enemy (the ROK Armed Force), terrain and weather, and troops available (the KPA). From the war planners' standpoint, the probability of US intervention was beyond the range of their considerations. It was the job of the political authorities of North Korea and the Soviet Union, who had almost rejected the idea. For the foreseeable future, as of May 1950, there was no prospect of rapid expansion of the ROK Armed Force, at least for a couple of months. Terrain and weather in South Korea in summer was not considered to bring about serious impediment to KPA operations. By the end of April 1950, the KPA had almost reached the force-level which had been planned to launch the all-out attack against South Korea. Therefore, the examining of the military balance (or unbalance?) between North Korea and South Korea in the spring of 1950 is the first step to figure out the reasoning behind the initial war plan of the invasion.

In May 1950, the ROK Army had a total strength of 95,000 men, out of which 65,000 men were divided into eight infantry divisions. The

65,000 men could man only six divisions by ROK Army table of organisation. By US Army standards, that strength could man only four divisions. So the ROK divisions were much understrength. Five divisions had three regiments, whereas three divisions had only two regiments. The strength of the divisions ranged from 9,915 men in the 1st Division to 6,866 men in the 8th Division. On the other hand, the KPA had seven infantry divisions of 11,000 men each and one tank brigade (in reality, an armoured division in all but name.) In addition to these regular divisions, three reserve divisions were to be available by the time the war began. Again security forces under the Ministry of the Interior added well trained infantry troops of about 15,000 men. Altogether, the total strength of the combat troops of the KPA was estimated to be around 135,000 men. So the KPA could achieve about two to one superiority over the ROK Army in combat strength.⁴

In artillery and armoured troops, the ROK Army was no match to the KPA. The KPA infantry divisions had their own artillery regiment, consisting of two 76mm gun battalions, one 122mm howitzer battalion and one 76mm self-propelled gun battalion. Infantry regiments had also organic artillery troops. Altogether, a KPA division had sixty artillery pieces. The ROK divisions had only an artillery battalion of 15 105mm howitzers. Moreover, not all of the divisions had those artillery battalions. Only five out of eight ROK divisions had an artillery battalion of this kind; whereas the other three divisions had no divisional artillery. Both ROK Army and KPA divisions did not have armoured units. However, the 12 self-propelled guns in each KPA division could be employed as a sort of armoured unit in terms of its armour, shock effect and fire-power. (Actually, in the initial phase of the Korean War, the self-propelled guns were not employed in long-range fire support missions but used in close combat missions to support the infantry. The ROK soldiers very often mistook the self-propelled guns for T-34 tanks.) The main armoured unit of the KPA was the 105th Tank Brigade equipped with 150 T-34 tanks, which were evaluated as top-class tanks in this period. The ROK Army had no tanks at all and had only an armoured cavalry battalion equipped with

27 light armoured cars. In all, as of April 1950, the ROK Army had 89 artillery pieces compared to 609 pieces of the KPA. The ROK Army had only 27 light armoured cars compared to 250 T-34 tanks (150 tanks in the 105th Tank Brigade plus 100 tanks to form two more tank brigades) and 154 SU-76 self-propelled guns of the KPA.⁵

The ROK Air Force had 22 aircraft - 12 liaison-type aircraft and 10 T-6 trainers - in May 1950. (The KMAG [US military advisory group to Korea] had 10 old F-51 (Mustang) aircraft, which were transferred to the ROK Air Force on 26 June 1950.) The North Korean Air Force had, or were to have soon, about 180 aircraft, out of which 132 aircraft were combat aircraft. So the ROK Air Force could hardly be called an air force compared to the North Korean Air Force. Both the ROK Navy and the North Korean Navy were not significant. Both navies were a coast guard rather than a navy. They had about 30 vessels each. Most of these vessels were patrol craft. The North Korean Navy had a small attack flotilla, consisting of four torpedo boats whereas the ROK Navy had one frigate. (Three more frigates became operational in the ROK Navy in mid-July 1950.)⁶

Since the ROK Navy and Air Force were not in a position to support the ROK Army in effect, let alone to perform their independent missions, (such as interdiction or amphibious operations), the major concerns of the invasion planners could well be concentrated on the ROK Army. As examined above, the KPA could enjoy two to one superiority over the ROK Army in strength and, taking into consideration artillery and armoured troops, the overwhelming superiority of the KPA was without doubt. The deployment of the ROK divisions was another vulnerable point which could be exploited by the KPA. Out of eight ROK divisions four divisions, the 1st, 7th, 6th, and 8th Divisions, were defending the positions from west to east along the 38th parallel in the spring of 1950. Beyond the 1st Division in the western sector, the 17th Regiment was deployed under the direct control of the ROK Army Headquarters. Altogether eleven regiments out of twenty two regiments of the ROK Army were defending the 38th parallel. Among the four divisions deployed along the

border, two divisions had only two regiments deployed at that time. A regiment of the 7th Division, which was to receive the heaviest blow from the KPA when the invasion began, was stationed in Onyang, 100km south of the 38th parallel.⁷

To make matters worse, the ROK divisions were not well deployed to stage effective defensive and counteroffensive operations. The 8th Division, with two regiments of about 6,900 men was covering 54km of the 38th parallel. The 6th Division with 9,000 men was responsible for the defence of 90km coverage. The 7th Division, with two regiments of 7,300 men, covered 40km. The 1st Division, with 9,700 men, covered 90km. The 17th Regiment in Ongjin area accounted for 54km frontage. Thus, the frontline divisions were too much extended to perform positional defence. On the other hand it was doubtful whether these ROK divisions could perform effective manoeuvring defence. There was too little space between the 38th parallel and Seoul which could be exchanged for time and freedom of action. The other four divisions were so much scattered in the rear area, as to be unable to reinforce the frontline divisions in time. These defects and limits in the deployment of the ROK divisions could work to the KPA's great advantage.⁸

The ROK Army troops had some combat experiences through the pseudo warfare from late 1948 to early 1950 - the punitive operations against the south Korean communist guerrillas and the border conflicts along the 38th parallel with the security forces of North Korea. However, those combat experiences were largely limited to small unit operations, mostly at battalion and lower level. They had little experience in combined arms operations at divisional and higher levels. So the bigger problems in education and training in the ROK Army were with the senior officers rather than junior officers or soldiers. Worst of all, its Chief of Staff, Major General Ch'ae Byong-dok was deemed to be not suitable for the post. An ex-ordnance officer in the Japanese army, General Ch'ae Byong-dok, had no experience of commanding combat troops. His deputy, Colonel Kim Baek-il, was an able tactician. But it was doubtful whether Colonel Kim

had the ability to assume the overall control of operations, deputising for Ch'ae Byong-dok. General Chae's chief American adviser, Brigadier General Roberts was no strategist. Some divisional commanders were experienced commanders, but they were mostly too old. Major-General Yi Ung-jun, first Chief of Staff of the ROK Army and then Commander of the 5th Division, was at the age of 60 in 1950. Most of other divisional commanders were inexperienced and too young in their late 20s and early 30s. Some experienced and respected officers were outside of the mainstream of the ROK Army. For instance, Major-General Kim Hong-il, who was to save the army from total collapse at the initial phase of the war, was then serving as Commandant of the Staff College. Brigadier General Kim Sok-won renowned for his bold command in the border conflicts of 1949, was not in the active list at that time. So the ROK Army leadership just before the war was not the best possible line-up.⁹

By contrast with ROK Army troops, KPA troops had developed step-by-step since 1946, unhampered by irritant provocations. By late 1949, the training stage of the KPA reached army corps level. Most of the KPA leaders were seasoned soldiers through the anti-Japanese struggle or the Chinese Civil War. They were relatively young, mostly in their 30s. Nevertheless, most of them had been engaged in revolutionary activities and guerrilla fighting, from their late teens. So they were experienced and mature for their age. (Kang Gon, Chief of the General Staff, was 33 years old in 1950. But he began his career as an anti-Japanese fighter at the age of 15.) Since the Soviet operation team was actually acting as the General Staff of the KPA, able and experienced army corps or divisional commanders were thought to be enough for the successful implementation of the invasion.¹⁰

In June 1950, the line-up of the KPA's leadership was as follows:

Please see over for table.

Position	Name	Origin
Premier (Supreme Commander)	Kim IlSung	K
Minister of National Defense	Ch'oe Yong-gon	K
Chief of the General Staff	Kan Gon	K
Chief of the Cultural Training Bureau	KimIl	K
Chief of the Artillery Command Bureau	Mu Chong	Y
CG I Corps	Kim Ung	Y
CG II Corps	Kim Kwang-hyop	K
CG 1st Division	Ch'oe Kwang	K
CG 2nd Division	Yi Ch'ong-song	S
CG 3rd Division	Yi Yong-ho	K
CG 4th Division	Yi Kwon-mu	Y
CG 5th Division	Kim Ch'ang-dok	Y
CG 6th Division	Bang Ho-san	Y
CG 12th Division (formerly 7th)	Chon U	Y
CG 105th Tank Division	Yu Kyong-su	K
CG 10th Division	Yi Yik-song	Y
CG 13th Division	Ch'oe Yong-jin	K
CG 15th Division	Pak Song-ch'ong	K

Key: K - the Kim IlSung group
 Y - the Yen'an group
 S - the Soviet-Korean group

At the highest level of the KPA leadership, the dominance of Kim IlSung and his followers was beyond question. However, at army corps and divisional commander level, the contribution of the veteran commanders returned from China was enormous. Out of seven crack divisions (1st to 6th Divisions and the 12th Division) the Yen'an group contributed four divisional commanders. As was to be proven in the war, these veteran commanders from the Yen'an group were valuable assets of the KPA.¹¹

The Soviet operation team must have made the invasion plan based on the above estimates of the strength, equipment, deployment, training, and leadership of both sides. On the initial war plan of the invasion, there are controversies among military experts and scholars in the western countries. One of the probable scenarios runs

as follows. The prime objective of the KPA was the occupation of Seoul. The North Korean leaders anticipated that the seizure of Seoul would almost certainly lead to the end of organised resistance by the ROK Army. Then the south Korean communists who had been latent would rise and liberate the rest of south Korea. The advance of the KPA troops would become actually a victory march into those liberated areas. This scenario emphasises the political significance which the capture of Seoul, the seat of South Korean government, would have. The invasion planners assumed, according to this scenario, that by destroying the ROK divisions defending Seoul the mission of KPA divisions would be almost over. This kind of scenario is suggestive in explaining the mysterious, three days' delay in the KPA divisions' advance to the south of the Han River, after the capture of Seoul on 28 June 1950.¹²

The above scenario emphasises the civil war nature - more specifically speaking, the national-liberation war- of the Korean War and the role of the south Korean communists in the conduct of the war. It is alleged that Pak Hon-yong, leader of the south Korean communists, had advocated more limited use of the KPA and assured a mass revolt in south Korea staged by south Korean communists coincidentally with the KPA's advance. In effect the mass revolt to be instigated by 200,000 south Korean communists (according to Pak Hon-yong's claim) did not materialise in the war. When Pak Hon-yong was purged at the end of the Korean War on the charge of 'espionage and anti-party activities' it was the failure of that uprising which Kim IlSung, through his subordinates, used to bring about Pak Hon-yong's downfall. However, it is one thing that Pak Hon-yong proposed such a strategy and it is another whether the invasion planners actually acted on such a premise. Available evidence shows that the Soviet operation team was not allured much by such line of action which was thought to depend too much on political fortune rather than a decisive military victory. Even if the occupation of Seoul were to be a decisive victory, that would not have meant the decisive victory to end the war. For the victory to be complete, the occupation of the

whole of south Korea was, whether aided by south Korean communists more or less, to be the final objective of the invasion.¹³

Another possible scenario of the initial war plan runs as follows. The KPA planned a grand pincer movement to encircle all ROK troops converging on the defense of Seoul. After capturing the main body of the ROK Army, the KPA was to pursue ROK troops fleeing south. The main body of the KPA was to advance along the Seoul-Pusan route while both flanks at east and west coasts were to perform a great pincer movement towards Pusan. The main body and flank forces were to reach Pusan by 15 August 1950.¹⁴ The central idea of this scenario was two fold: first, the annihilation of the enemy (ROK) field army as the prime objective of operation; and second, deep strike into the rear of the enemy. In order to capture and annihilate the ROK field army, according to this scenario, the KPA was to execute a daring Keil und Kessel tactic rather than consuming frontal attacks. This kind of war plan could be evaluated as a combination of Clausewitzian tradition of emphasising the annihilation of the enemy field army, Tuchachevski's operational concept of deep strike, and German Blitzkrieg tactics. The question is whether such a scenario was a genuine one devised by the Soviet operation team or a hypothetical one espoused by western military experts or military historians based on the actual development of the Korean War.

Judging from various intelligence plans, reconnaissance orders, operation orders, and official statements of the North Korean leaders, the North Korean invasion was to be finished by 15 July 1950. About one month, from 15 July to 15 August 1950, was assigned for implementing necessary reforms and arrangements in south Korea to establish a unified government over all Korea, on the very day that Korea had been liberated from Japan five years previously. Among those various materials, an intelligence plan issued by the Soviet operation team to the KPA Chief of Intelligence on 20 June 1950 is conclusive evidence for drawing the whole picture of the invasion plan.¹⁵

According to the intelligence plan, which was classified as 'Most Important, Soviet Secret', the invasion was to be implemented in three stages. Firstly, the objectives of the intelligence plan were given as follows:

1. To determine precise data on the defence system of the enemy.
2. Discover opportunely the enemy counteraction.
3. Discover opportunely the plans and determine the measures of the enemy's counteraction against our attack on the south.
4. To watch for possible reinforcements and military operations in the ports and aerodromes of the enemy.(emphasis by author)

The first stage was for 'Break-through of the Defence Lines and Annihilation of the Main Enemy Forces.' The second stage was for 'Development of the Attack in South Korea and Annihilation of the Reserves of the Enemy.' The third stage was for 'Mopping up operations in south Korea and Arrival on the south shore of the peninsula'.

According to the intelligence plan, the Soviet operation team anticipated that the ROK Army divisions would not stage stiff, static defence in the front line positions. They also anticipated that the ROK Army Headquarters would not pour all its reserve troops into the defence of Seoul, making the city 'a Stalingrad'. Rather, they estimated that the Han River which runs the south of Seoul, would become the major defence line of the ROK divisions, for reorganising retreating troops from the north of the river and receiving reinforcements from the rear. It is noteworthy that the Soviet planners did not give too much weight to Seoul. In order to break the anticipated ROK Army defence positions along the Han River, they planned to use all the KPA divisions except one division in the east coast sector. After accomplishing the second stage operation which would practically terminate the ROK Army as an organised defence force, in the third stage the KPA divisions were to reach major ports in the south coast of Korea. At this stage, the KPA divisions were to advance, on the whole, in parallel. The capture of Pusan was not

specifically emphasised. So a converging movement of all the KPA divisions towards Pusan, which was to be the actual course of the war after the intervention of the UN Forces, was not conceived at the planning stage of the war. The capture of Yosu, Mokpo, and Kunsan in the southwest shore of the peninsular was also given the same emphasis as Pusan. As such the Soviet operation team did not anticipate the seizure of Seoul to mean the virtual end of major KPA operations. Nor did they anticipate successful delaying operations of the ROK Army divisions along the Seoul-Pusan route.

The formation of two army corps commands in mid-June 1950 had some meaningful implication in connection with the initial war plan. Until that time, the KPA did not have an intermediary command structure between the General Staff and field army divisions. In order to form the new command posts for the two army corps, the General Staff released the bulk of its key staff officers. Kim Ung, Chief of the Combat Training Bureau, was appointed Commander of the I Corps. Hwang Sok-bok, a senior staff officer in the Operations Bureau, was appointed Chief of Staff to Kim Ung. Kim Kwang-hyop, Chief of the Operations Bureau, was appointed Commander of the II Corps. Choe In, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, was made Kim Kwang-hyop's Chief of Staff. Other major positions in the two army corps commands were also filled with senior staff officers in the General Staff.¹⁶ The fact that such key members of the General Staff were mobilised to form the two army corps commands implied that the Soviet operation team and the KPA leadership anticipated that once the war began, only exact implementation of the initial war plan would be enough. In other words, they did not anticipate that the development of the invasion would require considerable adjustment of the initial plan, which should have been sorted out by the full General Staff. Thus, the formation of the two army corps serves as evidence indicating the optimistic prospect of the invasion, envisaged by the Soviet operation team and the KPA leadership.

By examining the deployment of KPA divisions along the 38th parallel on the eve of the invasion, the initial war plan can be made

more discernible. In terms of terrain, there were (and still are) seven invasion routes from the north to the south in the waist area of the Korean peninsula. Each of seven KPA infantry divisions was made accountable for an invasion route. In the far western sector the 6th Division was deployed. Along the three invasion routes which directly lead to Seoul, three divisions - the 1st, 4th, and 3rd Divisions, were deployed. Each of these divisions was respectively supported by one tank regiment of the 105th Tank Brigade. So, the war planners did not intend to use the 105th Tank Brigade for an independent armour operation. In the central-eastern sector two divisions - the 2nd, and the 12th Divisions - were deployed. The 12th Division was supported by an independent tank regiment (30 tanks). In the east coast area the 5th Division was deployed. An independent motorcycle regiment was assigned to this division. One regiment strength special force - the 766th Unit - was to precede the advance of the 5th Division. The front-line divisions, together with their assigned units were grouped into three operation groups. The four divisions in the western sector were to operate under the command of the I Corps. Two divisions in the central-eastern sector were placed under the command of the II Corps. The 5th Division in the east coast area was to operate independently. Two divisions - the 13th and the 15th Divisions - were to remain as general reserves of the General Staff, following frontline divisions.¹⁷

The deployment of the KPA divisions also reflected the war planners' low estimate of ROK divisions. Each KPA division was to execute a break-through attack. But seen from the overall scheme, the KPA divisions were to execute a frontal attack along the entire frontline. Nominally the I Corps was designated as the main body of the attack with four infantry divisions plus one tank brigade. The II Corps was designated the subsidiary body, with two infantry divisions and one tank regiment. But, in terms of missions accorded to the two corps, that distinction was obscure. The mission of the subsidiary body is to check the enemy and absorb the enemy strength so that the main body can breakthrough the enemy with ease. However, in the invasion plan, the II corps was to perform a big pincer movement

southwestward to entrap ROK Army divisions which were assumed to be holding defence positions along the Han River perimeter. To perform this kind of grand envelopment operation, the II Corps should have been strengthened with considerable mechanised units. That such an appropriate allotment of combat strength among the operation groups was not made meant that the operation planners anticipated a steam rolling, parallel advance along the entire frontage, each division destroying whatsoever ROK troops it should encounter. Even if the KPA enjoyed overwhelming superiority over the ROK Army in the spring of 1950, such a complacency in the deployment of force could bring about unexpected setback if met by well-organised defence of the ROK Army troops. Some setback to the KPA in the initial weeks of the war, even before the massive influx of the US forces in mid-July 1950, revealed this complacency in the initial war plan. In conclusion, the initial war plan of the invasion devised by the Soviet operation team was a complacent, mediocre one.

THE INCOMPLETE BREAKTHROUGH

The mobilisation of the KPA for the invasion of June 1950 began in mid-May 1950. On 19 May 1950 divisional commanders were given preparation orders for the mobilisation. By the end of May 1950, the KPA troops were ready to carry out the 'summer combat training' to be held from 1 June 1950 to 15 July 1950'. On 10 June 1950, commanders of major KPA units were given orders for troop movement towards the front line area. On 11 June two army corps commands were organised to streamline command relationship between the General Staff and operating divisions. On 18 June the General Staff issued reconnaissance orders to divisional commanders in the frontline. On 23 June the General Staff issued operation orders for the invasion. Troops occupied the line of departure (LD) on that day. At 0400 am 25 June 1950, 30 minutes' artillery volley for the preparation of infantry assault began along the whole front.... Thus, the war began.

With the commencement of the invasion the North Korean leadership took measures to place North Korea on a war footing. First of all, Kim IlSung tried to justify the military action of the KPA as a defence against South Korean provocation. On 25 June 1950, at the extraordinary cabinet meeting, he declared:

Our war against the aggressive act of the traitors Syngman Rhee clique is a just war to safeguard democracy and the freedom and independence of the country.¹⁸

In support of his stand that the war was a just war, Kim IlSung insisted that it was the South Korean army that first launched a surprise attack against North Korea. Kim IlSung emphasised that North Korea had made every effort to solve the Korean question peacefully, through the efforts of the Korean people themselves, rather than by war.¹⁹

It is noteworthy at this stage that Kim IlSung did not indict the United States as the main culprit of the 'aggression'. Kim IlSung's denunciation of the United States was confined to the claim that it was instrumental in establishing and maintaining the Rhee government and in equipping and training the South Korean army. This point is significant in connection with North Korea's justification of the war. With the progress of the Korean War, North Korea shifted its main target from the Rhee government to the US government, claiming that it was the Americans who masterminded the war, while downgrading the Rhee government as a mere agent of the aggressive policy of the US government. Presently, the North Korean version of the Korean War stands on this 'US conspiracy' theory. However, as of 25 June 1950, the North Korean leadership pointed at the Rhee government as the main culprit. In the correct understanding of the Korean War it is necessary to distinguish between the original version of North Korean justification of the Korean War, made in June 1950, and the later version of North Korean historiography on the Korean War, 'supported' by 'vast evidence' which points to the US government as the mastermind of the war.²⁰

In his speech on 25 June 1950, Kim IlSung expressed a belief in an easy victory in the war. As grounds for this belief he stressed the following: first, this war is a just war; secondly; the party and the government will lead the war with superb leadership; thirdly, the People's Army is incomparably stronger than the enemy; fourthly, we have a solid home front capable of ensuring victory; and fifthly, the international situation favours us. Kim IlSung expressed especially strong confidence in the superiority of the KPA. He affirmed that the KPA could expand within a short time since the party and the government trained the KPA on the principle of making them the elite army. In the estimate of the international situation, Kim IlSung specifically pointed to the establishment of the PRC in October 1949. He said that the triumph of the Chinese revolution greatly changed the relationship among world political forces.²¹ It was, said Kim IlSung, also a heavy blow to the Syngman Rhee government since 'at present Jian Jiesu [Chiang Kai-shek] and his ilk are not in a position to help the Syngman Rhee government. In contrast we are enjoying the active support and encouragement from the peoples of many countries including the Soviet Union and China'.²² That the victory of the Chinese communists had a considerable encouragement on the making of Korean War decision by the North Korean leadership is vividly revealed in this speech.

On 26 June 1950, Kim IlSung made a radio address to the whole Korean people, appealing to go all out for victory in the war. The overall contents and tone of this address was almost the same as the one delivered at the cabinet meeting of 25 June. The significance of this address is that it was a declaration of war against the ROK government. His theme of justifying of the war was, as declared at the cabinet meeting, that 'the war we are fighting against the fratricide provoked by the traitorous Syngman Rhee clique is a just one - a war for the country's reunification, independence, freedom, and democracy'.²³ On the possibility of US intervention Kim IlSung did not express a serious worry. He briefly touched on this matter, saying that 'all the Korean people must heighten their vigilance and

keep sharp watch on every movement of the US imperialists who stand behind the traitorous Syngman Rhee clique'.²⁴ Except for this statement, Kim Il Sung did not further refer to a possibility of US intervention.

Following Kim IlSung's formal declaration of a state of war, on 26 June 1950, a Military Commission was set up to conduct the war efforts. The Military Commission was modelled after the State Defence Committee (GKO) of the Soviet Union. Just as the GKO, the Military Commission, was vested with 'all power in the country, with a view to mobilising all national efforts for the war, reorganising all work on a war footing and achieving the final victory'.²⁵ The Military Commission comprised the following members: Premier Kim IlSung; Pak Hon-yong, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister; Hong Myong-Hui, Deputy Premier; Kim Ch'aek, Deputy Premier and Industry Minister; Chong Ch'un-taek, Chairman of the State Planning Commission; Ch'oe Yong-gon, Defence Minister; Pak Il-u, Interior Minister.

Among the seven members Kim Ch'aek and Ch'oe Young-gon were faithful lieutenants of Kim IlSung. Pak Hon-yong was still being regarded as the leader of south Korean communists. Pak Il-u was a crown prince among the Yen-an group, with the backing of Kim Tu-bong and Mu Chong. Hong Myong-hui represented a broad range of left-wing and nationalistic intellectuals. Chong Ch'un-taek was the key architect of North Korean economy. The composition of the Military Commission indicated that, as of June 1950, the Kim IlSung group was not mature enough to run the country by themselves. However, it is not accurate to estimate the North Korean leadership in this period as a collective leadership. There was no doubt that Kim IlSung's paramount position was taken for granted. It is necessary to distinguish a share of power among competing power groups from a division of labour among subordinates. During the war period, the Military Commission was to function as the supreme national and military authority of North Korea.²⁶

Within three days of the invasion the KPA troops succeeded in capturing Seoul. The ROK Army divisions around Seoul in effect disintegrated by mid-night of 27 June. The ROK government and Army Headquarters were evacuated from Seoul by 02.00am 28 June. It was declared that at 11.30am 28 June, Seoul was 'liberated' by the KPA. The KPA succeeded in a surprise although it had been an open secret among the ROK Army leadership from early 1950 that a North Korean invasion was imminent. The success of the KPA was largely owing to this 'surprise' factor, which was, mostly, the making of the ROK political and military leaders.

The most vulnerable point for the ROK Army in the conduct of the war was the ineptitude of its political and military leadership at the highest level. President Rhee Syngman was an old patriot who had fought the Japanese for almost forty years. But his method of struggle was mainly through bulletins rather than bullets. Though a master of power politics and diplomacy, he had little experience and concerns in strategic matters. Defence Minister Shin Song-mo was ex-captain of a British merchant ship. He was not suitable for that position either. (When the war broke out at dawn of 25 June, the duty officer in the Defence Ministry could not contact his minister, because 'captain' Shin had a practice of having telephone lines disconnected on holidays - 25 June 1950 was Sunday - so that he could enjoy holidays without being hampered by telephone calls, which practice, he said, he had learned from English gentlemen.) On the day of the North Korean invasion the ROK government convened an extraordinary cabinet meeting. But in the meeting no substantial measure to meet the extraordinary situation was taken but a wait-and-see policy. The ROK government promised that Seoul would be defended to the last. While the Korean Broadcasting Service was repeatedly broadcasting that message, Rhee Syngman and his closest assistants were leaving Seoul at mid-night of 27 June, without warning the people to prepare for the eventual fall of Seoul into the hands of the enemy or establishing an effective system for conducting the war effort.

In the absence of firm political leadership, the conduct of war was to rest upon Major-General Ch'ae Byong-dok, Army Chief of Staff, a thirty-six year old, ex-ordnance officer. Before the war broke out, the ROK Army Headquarters had developed a make-shift defence plan. The defence plan assumed the Ch'orwon-Yonch'on-Uijongbu-Seoul route as the most probable invasion route from the north. The main body of the ROK Army troops were to be used to defend this route. In case this defence line collapsed, the remaining troops were to conduct a strategic retreat to the south of the Han River. The ROK Army leadership was vaguely thinking of depending on US aid in case of further worsening of the situation. The weak point in this defence plan was that it did not specify the decisive line of defence where all the main efforts were concentrated. The defence of Seoul was important politically. But militarily, that mission was hardly possible. In terms of military considerations the Han River Line was the best defence line. The Han River was a very effective barrier and the area south of the Han River was optimal for the concentration of reinforcements from the rear area divisions. Even though the defence of Seoul was important, reinforcing divisions should have been deployed to build the Han River Defence Line rather than consumed north of the Han River.²⁷

In terms of consequence General Ch'ae acted upon the worst scenario by throwing reserve divisions north of Seoul. He deployed altogether three divisions to augment the defence of Seoul. Even cadets of the Korean Military Academy were put in for this operation. To make matters worse, he threw these troops in piecemeal. As a result the ROK defence positions were overwhelmed by the KPA divisions in turn. And while these troops were still fighting in the north of Seoul, General Ch'ae himself retreated to the south of Seoul, blowing up the Han River bridge, the only route for retreat for the ROK troops north of the river. So the Han River Defence Line, conceived in the defence plan, was on the brink of collapse with more than 30,000 fleeing soldiers locked north of the river. Only the heroic command of Major-General Kim Hong-il saved the ROK Army from this catastrophe. General Kim Hong-il, then Commandant of the Staff College, personally

assumed the task of preparing the Han River Defence Line, assembling soldiers individually retreating from north of the Han River by swimming or small craft. If it had not been for General Kim Hong-il's timely and determined command, the fiasco which General Ch'ae brought about in the first three days of the war would have resulted in the total destruction of the main body of the ROK Army.²⁸

The fiasco of the ROK Army in the initial days of the war was exacerbated by some improper measures that General Ch'ae Byong-dok had taken before the war broke out. On 10 June 1950, just 15 days before the outbreak of the war, General Ch'ae conducted a large-scale reshuffle of the top-ranking officers. (On that day, 10 June, KPA divisional commanders were ordered to move troops to the frontline.) Out of eight divisional commanders, five were changed. Among four divisional commanders accountable for the defence of the frontline, three commanders were changed for new ones. Two of them were elevated rightly from regimental commanders. At Army Headquarters, Colonel Kang Mun-bong, Chief of the Operations Bureau, was ordered to wait for study in the US Staff College. When the war broke out in two weeks' time, the newly appointed frontline divisional commanders had to fight the KPA divisions without fully grasping the situation of their subordinate units, terrain, and opposite KPA troops. Colonel Kang's case was another serious problem. He had been serving as chief of operations since September 1947. Most of the defence plans were hammered out through him. In the circumstance that Ch'ae Byong-dok, Army Chief of Staff, was not thought to be a proper selection for that position, Colonel Kang's presence and contribution in time of war was urgently needed more than ever. The untimely and unwise reshuffle of ROK Army leadership in such a volatile situation of mid-June 1950 was hardly understandable.²⁹

There were more mysterious, even suspicious, measures taken by Ch'ae Byong-dok just before the outbreak of the war. On 11 June an emergency warning was issued to ROK troops. It was lifted as of 24.00 hours on 23 June. By virtue of the lifting of this emergency warning, leaves and passes, which had been suspended for two weeks, were

granted to officers and soldiers. As a result, on the day of the KPA invasion most of ROK frontline divisions had only one-third of the total troops in barracks, let alone in defending positions. High ranking officers in Seoul were attending a social party until late at night on 24 June in celebration of the opening of the officers' club of the Army Headquarters. A third of total vehicles possessed by the ROK Army had been sent for repair to logistic depots when the war began. As for firearms an average of 15 per cent of all kinds of firearms in the frontline divisions were sent for repair.³⁰

Not all of the KPA divisions succeeded in breaking through the ROK Army positions on the invasion day. In the central-eastern front the 6th ROK Division under Colonel Kim Chong-o successfully halted the advance of the II KPA Corps for three days. The 6th Division was accountable for the defense of the central-eastern front of 90km coverage. Colonel Kim Chong-o decided to concentrate the main efforts of the division for the defence of Ch'unchon, south of the Soyang River. By making use of the natural barrier, the Soyang River, and superbly organising defence efforts, Colonel Kim Chong-o delayed the advance of two KPA divisions - the 2nd and the 12th Divisions - for three days. Due to this delay, the II KPA Corps could not reach the southeastern area of the Han River in time, thus, allowing the fleeing ROK troops in the western front time for reorganisation and strengthening defence against advancing troops of the I KPA Corps. As a result, the initial KPA war plan which aimed to capture the whole remaining ROK field army troops in the Han River Perimeter did not materialise. It was a grave strategic setback for the KPA. The battle of Ch'unch'on also revealed the weak points of KPA tactics. Their attack was too much stereotyped, repeating fruitless frontal assaults against well organised defence positions. Largely owing to this defect in the KPA attacks, the 6th ROK Division could inflict heavy casualties upon the II KPA Corps. With the fall of Seoul on 28 June, the 6th ROK Division made a retrograde movement to link with the western front. The 8th ROK Division in the east coast area also successfully halted the advance of the 5th KPA Division for three days.³¹

While divisions in the central-eastern and eastern sectors - especially the 6th Division - were successfully delaying the advance of KPA divisions towards the Han River Perimeter, ROK troops in the western sector were rapidly recovering from the first defeats and began to stage successful defence and delaying operations. From 28 June to 4 July ROK troops deployed along the southern bank of the Han River successfully halted further advance of the I KPA Corps across the river. The KPA divisions could not cross the Han River for six days, confronted by this stiff resistance of the ROK troops. The six days' delay of the KPA advance at the Han River Crossing Operation earned the ROK Army and reinforcing US troops invaluable time. As a hypothesis, if the KPA had succeeded in breaking quickly through the ROK Han River Defence Line and in capturing the defending troops, the course of the war would have developed very differently.

The ROK Army's success of the Han River Line defence was largely owing to three factors. The first was the superb command of General Kim Hong-il. At his own initiative he began to regroup fleeing soldiers into battalions and deployed them for the defence of the Han River Line. Under his command, remaining troops of the badly battered four divisions - the 2nd, 5th, 7th and Capital Divisions - were regrouped into the Sihung Area Defence Command. An old patriot, who had fought for the independence of Korea for forty years, in China, General Kim Hong-il was highly respected by ROK Army officers and soldiers. His patriotism, indomitable spirit and combat experience awoke demoralised ROK officers and soldiers to a sense of sacrifice for the nation. Under General Kim Hong-il ROK soldiers began to regain confidence.

The second factor was the appearance of US military support. The bombers and fighters of the US Far East Air Force (FEAF) were especially effective in proving the promise that the United States would not abandon South Korea. General MacArthur's tour of inspection along the Han River Defence Line on 29 June was received by ROK leaders and troops as another visible evidence of US support. Though

the appearance of US support was still symbolic at that stage, the morale-boosting effect to the ROK troops who had been stunned by the KPA offensive was great.

The third factor was the incomprehensible delay of the KPA attack against the Han River Defence Line after it occupied Seoul on 28 June. The Han River is a great obstacle against attacking forces which are not well prepared for cross-river operation. The KPA lacked in engineer equipment for this kind of operation at that time. Admitting this kind of excuse, there is no denying that the KPA troops north of the Han River, which totalled four divisions, did not give full weight for the attack for a couple of days. This delay in the KPA attack against the Han River Defence Line has been open to question. A plausible explanation would be found in the over-optimistic attitude to the war of the North Korean political and military leadership, overjoyed by the capture of Seoul within three days of the invasion. Another explanation is that the KPA commanders and the Soviet operation team had an over methodical concept of cross-river operations. For them a hasty assault operation would have been thought to be too costly and unnecessary at that time. Consequently, the ROK troops under General Kim Hong-il could benefit from this easy-going mood of the KPA.

The fall of Seoul on 28 June 1950 was the highlight of the North Korean invasion. By that time, the situation of the war seemed on the whole favourable to the KPA, with the exception of the unexpected setback in the Ch'unch'on area. The reason for this easy victory of the KPA in the initial days of the war was clear. The KPA assault divisions overwhelmed ROK frontline divisions in strength. They were supported by sizable armoured troops. The ineptitude in the conduct of the war by the ROK political and military leaders at the highest level was a great advantage to the KPA. The defects in deployment and combat readiness of the ROK Army troops exacerbated the situation of the ROK Army which was already far inferior in quantitative military balance to the KPA.

But the KPA victory was not a complete one. However psychologically battered and deprived of heavy equipment, the bulk of the ROK Army troops were not captured. They were disorganised, but managed to escape from being captives of the KPA. If boosted by determined commanders and foreign aid, these fleeing ROK soldiers could transform themselves into a reconstructed army, as was proven so later. So, in conclusion, in spite of seemingly splendid success of the KPA breakthrough in the first days of the invasion, it was, seen from hindsight, not wholly successful. The KPA leadership does not seem to have noticed this grave mistake at that time.³²

In examining the course of the Korean War in the initial phase it is not enough simply to compare the military balance (in fact, imbalance,) between the north and south. It is a superficial observation to conclude that, considering the military imbalance, the collapse of the ROK Army troops along the frontline was inevitable. Certain ROK units led by vigilant and experienced commanders proved that even the ROK troops inferior in strength and arms could effectively delay the advance of KPA troops. Even defeated troops later turned into robust soldiers, after having recovered from the first shock and led by respected, experienced commanders, and boosted by the US Air Force squadrons. So it is not proper to estimate that the fiasco of the ROK troops in the initial phase of the war was inevitable due to its inferior strength and arms.

In the strategic context it was the political misjudgment of the North Korean leadership (and its mentors) rather than tactical complacency which eventually broke down the North Korean invasion. The US reaction to the invasion was swift and resolute. There is no convincing evidence indicating that such measures had been premeditated as some revisionist scholars and North Korean organs have claimed. Upon receiving the report of the North Korean invasion President Truman ordered immediate military measures deemed necessary to help the Republic of Korea, along with diplomatic efforts to get the United Nations sanction and support. On 27 June 1950 Truman

ordered US naval and air support of South Korea. From mid-day of 27 June the fighters of the US FEAF were being engaged in fighting with North Korean aircraft. From 28 June, the fighters and bombers of the US FEAF launched attacks against North Korean ground force. The primary objective of these attacks was, first of all, to boost morale of the retreating ROK troops.³³

On 29 June 1950, 18 B-26s of the US FEAF bombed P'yongyang. This bombing, the first against a target in North Korea, expressly awoke the North Korean leadership to the fact that something was going badly with the 'fatherland liberation war.' The effect of the bombing against P'yongyang, the heart of North Korea, was much more direct and physical than the United Nations resolution days before. There is good evidence showing that, until hours before the bombing, the North Korean leadership was not seriously worried about the progress of the invasion. In the morning of that day (29 June) Pak Hon-yong, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, made a broadcast speech appealing to the south Korean communists latent in south Korea and the people in the south. In this speech, Pak Hon-yong pointed to the South Korean government, not the US government, as the main 'culprit' of the war. Pak's denunciation of the Americans was still confined to the claim that the United States was instrumental in establishing and maintaining the Rhee government.³⁴

On the probability of massive US intervention into the war, he expressed an optimistic view, saying that 'the American imperialists have begun to retreat from the south and their instrument of aggression, the UN Korean Commission, fled to Tokyo.'³⁵ He declared that 'the complete extermination of the south Korean government and the complete emancipation of south Korea was only a matter of time.'³⁶ (emphasis by author) Pak Hon-yong's speech revealed the jubilant mood of the North Korean leadership on the course of the invasion by that time. The US bombing of P'yongyang poured cold water on this North Korean leaders' optimism. It is apparent through examining subsequent measures which the North Korean leadership took after 29 June 1950, that they came to understand that they were in a new phase of the war.

(The North Korean history of the Korean War affirms that the war entered a new phase from 30 June 1950.)³⁷

On 1 July, a major reshuffle in the KPA leadership was made. Major-General Kim Kwang-hyop, Commander of the II Corps, was replaced by Lieutenant-General Mu Chong, Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of Artillery. Kim Kwang-hyop was demoted to Mu Chong's Chief of Staff. Major General Ch'oe In, formerly Chief of Staff to Kim Kwang-hyop, was summoned to P'yongyang. Major-General Yi Ch'ong-song, Commander of the 2nd Division was replaced by Major-General Ch'oe Hyon, Commander of the 3rd Security Brigade. Yi Ch'ong-song was instead appointed Commander of the Nam Hae Brigade. Major-General Chon U, Commander of the 12th Division, was replaced by Major-General Ch'oe Ch'ung-guk.³⁸ Thus, the high commanders in the II Corps were wholly replaced. The reorganisation of the II Corps leadership reflected the discomfort and worry of the KPA leadership on the unsatisfactory performance of the II Corps in the Ch'unch'on operation. Newly appointed commanders in the II Corps, especially Mu Chong and Ch'oe Hyon, were probably the best field commanders Kim IlSung could choose at that time. The fact that such celebrities were ordered to assume the battlefield was an indication that the North Korean leadership had become more serious about the prospect of the war.

On 4 July, the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly appointed Kim IlSung Supreme Commander of the KPA. It is significant that Kim IlSung assumed this office at this point, ten days after the war began. While becoming Chairman of the Military Commission on 26 June he was not yet named Supreme Commander. In communist countries, the office of supreme commander is not a ceremonial one. The practice is that, in peace time, party leader or head of state is not explicitly named Supreme Commander. Only when the party leader or head of state becomes involved in the day-to-day business of the armed forces is he officially nominated Supreme Commander. The fact that Kim IlSung was named Supreme Commander on 4 July meant that Kim IlSung decided to take 'upon himself the destiny of his country and people',

rising 'in new determination to carry out the great historic mission entrusted to him by the people at this stern and dangerous time.'³⁹

On 5 July a Front Command was formed to increase activity and mobility of battle command at the front. Kim Ch'aek, Deputy Premier, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Front Command. Kang Gon, Chief of the General Staff, was appointed Chief of Staff to Kim Ch'aek. Kim Ch'aek was given the rank of General, as was Ch'oe Yong-gon, Minister of National Defence. Kim Ch'aek's appointment to the commander-in-chief of all the KPA troops in the front was another evidence indicating how seriously the North Korean leadership became worried about the new phase of the war. Kang Gon retained his position as Chief of the General Staff. However, in reality, Kang Gon could not concurrently perform two roles - Chief of the General Staff and Chief of Staff of the Front Command. So, Nam Il, a Soviet Korean and later chief North Korean delegate to the Armistice Talks, was appointed acting Chief of the General Staff. With this arrangement, the Ministry of National Defence in P'yongyang under Ch'oe Yong-gon and Nam Il, was to function mainly as a logistics command and a replacement command. The responsibility for conducting operations in the front was to be placed mainly upon the shoulders of Kim Ch'aek and Kang Gon. By that time the Soviet operation team had allegedly left the front because a cautious Stalin became worried about the possibility of these Soviet officers being captured by US troops.⁴⁰

Along with the formation of the Front Command, military commissars were assigned to major commands. Lieutenant-General Kim Il, Chief of the Cultural Training Bureau, was assigned to the Front Command. Kim Yol, a Soviet-Korean and Chief of the Organisations Department of the party (WPK), was appointed Military Commissar of the I Corps. Kim Ch'an, also a Soviet-Korean and Vice-Minister of Finance, was assigned to the II Army Corps. As indicated in the selection, those military commissars were expected to assist field commanders mainly in politico-military matters. They were selected for these positions for their administrative skills and experiences in propaganda works. At this stage they were assistants rather than watchmen to the field

commanders. Their main function and responsibility was to help the field commanders concentrate all their nerves and efforts on operations.⁴¹

Along with the reorganisation of command structure, more units were organised from security forces under the Ministry of the Interior. The 7th Division was activated in Haeju on 3 July from the 7th Security Brigade. Major-General Baek Nak-ch'il was appointed commander of the division. The 8th Division was formed from the 1st Security Brigade in Kangnung on 1 July. Major-General O Baeng-ryong, Commander of the 1st Security Brigade was elevated to be the commander of the division. The 9th Division was organised from the 3rd Security Brigade on 5 July. Major-General Kim Tae-hong was appointed commander of the division. By activating these three divisions the KPA came to have 13 infantry divisions and one tank division. (The 105th Tank Brigade was formally elevated to the 105th Tank Division on 5 July 1950.)⁴²

In terms of training standards and combat experience those 14 Divisions were, as of early July 1950, divided sharply into two categories. The first category divisions included the following: the 1st to 6th, 12th Infantry Divisions and the 105th Tank Division. The second category divisions were those which had become operational since late June 1950. The second category divisions could in turn be divided into two groups. Two divisions organised from the Democratic Youth Training Centres - the 13th and 15th Divisions - and one division originated from the security forces - the 8th Division - were relatively well trained compared to the other three divisions of this kind - the 7th, 9th and 10th Divisions. The former group divisions were able to take part in operations from early July 1950. However, the latter group divisions were to be operational only in early August 1950.

It is not a usual practice in communist countries to transfer security forces under the Ministry of Interior or the State Security Commission to the Ministry of Defence. That is because the mission,

organisation, and equipment of security forces are different in many ways from those of defence forces. That North Korean leaders made the decision to reinforce the KPA with those security forces is good evidence that the North Korean leadership felt that a serious situation had developed in the war. On the other hand, it is very doubtful that these three security brigades had already been earmarked to the KPA before the war. One possible way of establishing the facts on this question is to examine the KPA practice of forming divisions before the Korean War. In elevating brigades to divisions, the KPA leadership first expanded and strengthened brigades to almost division-level units, in all but name. After evaluating whether or not those brigades had grown enough to be called divisions the KPA leadership elevated the brigades to division. The elevation of the 3rd Independent Mixed Brigade to the 3rd Division in October 1948 was such a case. The other cases are: the elevation of the 4th Independent Mixed Brigade to the 4th Division in March 1950; and the elevation of the 105th Tank Brigade to the 105th Tank Division in July 1950. Unlike these cases, before the elevation to KPA divisions status, the three Security Brigades remained much closer to regiments than divisions. In this regard, the formation of the three divisions from the security forces in early July 1950 was unusual, precipitated by the worsening situation of the war.

On 8 July Kim IlSung made a radio address titled, "Repel the US Imperialist Invasion!". Kim IlSung's anger and frustration at the US intervention in the war were well expressed in this address.

The Koreans have never encroached upon an inch of the territory of the United States of America, nor have they even infringed upon its sovereignty in the slightest degree. Our people never committed any hostile act against the American people, nor have they ever harmed the life and property of the United States of America. Why, then do the US imperialist send their troops into our territory, interfere militarily in the internal affairs of our country, wantonly

slaughter our people and soak our beautiful land with blood?⁴³

Had it not been for the their direct armed intervention, the fratricidal war ignited by their underdogs would have ended, our country would clearly have been unified and the people in the southern half completely liberated from the police terror of US imperialism and the Syngman Rhee clique.⁴⁴

Kim IlSung appealed to the entire Korean people to rise up to meet this new challenge. He flatly ruled out any intention to settle the war with other measures than direct confrontation against the US forces. Thus, he formally declared that North Korea had entered an unexpected, new war against the United States.

Advance by Attrition

While the North Korean leadership was taking measures for meeting the new development of the war, troops of the US Army began to arrive in Korea. The decision to introduce US ground forces into the Korean theatre was taken by Truman on 30 June. General MacArthur was given on that day the following orders: (1) to send two divisions to Korea from Japan; and (2) to establish a naval blockade of North Korea. The first combat unit of the US Army to arrive in Korea was Task Force Smith, from the 24th Division stationed in Kyushu, Japan. Task Force Smith arrived in Pusan, on 1 July. On 5 July, the first American ground unit collided with a regiment of the 4th KPA Division. The first American battle at Osan ended in a disaster for Task Force Smith. The main force of the 24th Division completed its movement to Korea between 2 and 6 July. The 24th Division under the command of Major-General William F. Dean, fought successive holding actions along the Seoul-Pusan route, at Pyongtaek, Ansong, Chonan, Chonui, Choch'iwon, and south across the Kum River to the strategically important city of Taejon until 20 July.

The 25th Division, the second US Division to be committed in the war, arrived in Korea between 10 and 15 July, under the command of Major-General William B. Kean. The third large American unit to reach Korea was the 1st Cavalry Division, commanded by Major-General Hobart R. Gray. The division arrived on 18 July at Pohang, on the east coast. There followed two battalions of the 29th Independent Regiment arriving in Pusan on 24 July from Okinawa. The 9th Regimental Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division arrived in Korea on 31 July. The 5th Regimental Combat Team stationed in Hawaii arrived in Korea on 31 July. The rest of the 2nd Infantry Division and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade were to arrive by mid-August 1950. Thus, the US ground forces in Korea rapidly expanded from early July to mid-August 1950.

From 17 July 1950, all the UN ground forces in Korea were placed under the command of Lieutenant-General Walton H. Walker, Commander of the Eighth US Army. Before that, on 8 July, General MacArthur was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the UN Forces. On 14 July President Rhee Syngman assigned command authority over all the ROK Armed forces to General MacArthur. On 17 July General MacArthur assigned command authority over all the UN ground forces in Korea, including the ROK Army, to General Walker. General Walker was to direct the ROK Army through Major-General Chong Il-Kwon, newly appointed Army Chief of Staff.

Under General Walker the US and ROK ground forces were deployed as follows; the US divisions were accountable for the defence of the western sector including the Seoul-Pusan route. East of the US divisions, ROK divisions were deployed. Until 20 July only the 24th Division was available for the defence of the western sector. In late July the 25th and 1st Cavalry Divisions were to defend this sector together with the 24th Division. The problem was that after Taejon had fallen to the KPA divisions on 20 July, the left flank of the UN Forces became increasingly exposed. (Until the 24th Division reached Taejon, the left of this division had effectively been flanked by the coast. With the 24th division being pushed further than Taejon, to the southeast, the left flank of the UN Forces became exposed to KPA

attack.) Until late July 1950 this vulnerability in the UN defence was not fully noticed by either side. At the end of July, the 6th KPA division which had been advancing southward suddenly turned eastward and staged a dagger-attack aiming at Pusan, the operations base of the UN Forces. This KPA initiative almost caused a panic in the UN Command. General Walker overcame this crisis by dispatching the 25th US Division from the central front to the left front. The crisis in Masan area in late July, which was directly linked with the destiny of Pusan, manifestly revealed the weak point in the UN Forces deployment.

The penetration of the 6th KPA Division into the western flank of the UN Forces was once praised as a masterpiece of KPA operations. For example, the official history of the US Army in the Korean War describes the manoeuvre as follows, 'Its manoeuvre was one of the most successful of either army in the Korean War. It compelled the redistribution of Eighth Army at the end of July and caused Tokyo and Washington to alter their plans for the conduct of the war.'⁴⁵ However, it is open to discussion whether the manoeuvre of the 6th Division was the best and most timely one. The 6th Division spent at least ten days in occupying major cities and ports in southwestern provinces of south Korea, in which it met little organised resistance by ROK army troops. If the KPA leadership had noticed the vulnerability of the UN Forces deployment in the left flank earlier and fully enough, it should have hurried the 6th Division to the assault of Pusan more swiftly and resolutely. That the 6th Division had spent invaluable days in virtually administrative occupation of southern cities and ports meant that the KPA leadership was idle in exploiting the vulnerability in the UN Forces deployment. In terms of consequence the 6th KPA division succeeded in producing a panic in the UN Command and pinned down more than 25,000 US troops for a couple of weeks. But it does not necessarily mean that the KPA leadership exhibited a strategic masterpiece. To be a real masterpiece the manoeuvre of the 6th Division should have been executed earlier.

In the battles against US divisions deployed along the Seoul-Pusan route, the KPA divisions exhibited a relatively good performance.

Especially the battle of Taejon around 20 July 1950 was a great success. The 24th Division which fought two KPA divisions - the 3rd and 4th Divisions - suffered a humiliating defeat in the battle. Even the divisional commander, Major-General Dean, went missing in action.⁴⁶ (General Dean was later captured by KPA soldiers and spent three years in North Korea as a POW.) Subsequently the 3rd KPA Division defeated the 1st Cavalry Division on 24 July. The 2nd KPA Division broke through the defence positions of the 25th US Division during 23-28 July. On 31 July the 3rd KPA Division pushed the 1st Cavalry Division from Kimch'on area. The 25th Division pulled out of Sangju area by 31 July pressed by the 15th KPA Division.

Through these attacks the KPA divisions used essentially the same tactics they had employed against the 24th US Division at Taejon - a holding frontal attack, with the bulk of its force enveloping the American flanks and establishing strongly held roadblocks behind the defence positions. Until the end of July, the US divisions were not able to form a tightly linked front. Frontage for the US divisions was too wide to effectively cover flanks and secure the rear behind the frontline. The KPA troops easily infiltrated these gaps and succeeded in enveloping the US troops. Road-bound US troops were especially apprehensive about the possibility of being cut off by KPA infiltration into the rear of the defence positions. Once they began to feel that the rear seemed insecure the US soldiers almost panicked and withdrew hurriedly. After their five year occupation of Japan, the newly arriving US troops were no longer seasoned soldiers. They became embarrassed to know that the 'invincibility' of the US Army did not discourage the KPA troops. The KPA divisions exploited these weaknesses in US troops - in deployment, tactical doctrine, and morale - to the full extent. Even though General Walker and his subordinate commanders were seasoned, Second World War veterans, their ability to control the untrained soldiers had its limitations.⁴⁷

To the east of the US divisions five ROK divisions were performing delaying actions during July 1950, while covering the central and eastern fronts. Against these ROK divisions, the Front Command of the

KPA allotted six divisions under the II Corps. Throughout July 1950, the KPA divisions were steadily pushing the ROK divisions southward. The 5th Division in the east coast area, the 12th Division to the west of the 5th Division, were performing well compared to other divisions. (Both these two divisions were organised with the veterans from the Chinese Civil War.) Other divisions especially the 13th and 15th Divisions were not performing well. The ROK divisions were staging effective delaying operations, inflicting heavy casualties upon the KPA divisions and earning time for the arriving US divisions. Of all the KPA casualties by the end of July, which totalled 58,000, about 50,000 casualties were incurred by ROK troops. Battles between the KPA and ROK divisions in central and eastern fronts were on the whole neck and neck. But in many cases, the ROK divisions had to withdraw, even after blocking the KPA attacks, to maintain the link with the US divisions in the left flank which were being pushed back by divisions of the I KPA Corps.

On the whole, the advance of the KPA divisions during July 1950 was steady. But it failed to effect a decisive victory over the retreating UN Forces. It was an advance by attrition. If the KPA leadership had concentrated available resources on the occupation of Pusan more daringly from early July rather than pushing the ROK and US forces along the whole front their chance of a victory would have been greater. It is noteworthy to remember that the sudden appearance of the 6th KPA Division in late July to the west flank of the Naktong River, within 60km of Pusan, was once described as the most critical moment in the UN Forces defence operation stage in the summer of 1950. If the 6th Division had reached the front a week earlier, or the 6,000 men strong division had been strengthened by sizable troops, the course of the war would have been changed. The case of the 6th Division is only a notable one. Having failed to execute a Blitzkrieg in early July, the KPA was being dragged into a war of attrition from late July which it had no prospect of winning over the UN Forces.

On 1 August 1950 General Walker issued an operational order to all UN ground forces in Korea for their planned withdrawal behind the Naktong River. The Naktong River Defense Line, (the Walker Line, or the Pusan Perimeter), was the vital position where General Walker intended to make his stand. As General MacArthur stoutly declared on 27 July, 'a repetition of Dunkirk should not happen in any case.'⁴⁸ By 4 August UN Forces established defense positions along the Walker Line. The Pusan Perimeter was a rectangular area about 160km from north to south and 80km from west to east. The Naktong River formed the western barrier except for a 25km sector from south of Yongsan to the South Sea. To the north an irregular curved line through mountains from Waegan to Yongdok formed the northern front. Waegan was the connecting point between the northern front and the western front. South of Waegan three US divisions were deployed along the Naktong River. East of Waegan the perimeter was held by five ROK divisions. General Walker's headquarters was located in Taegu, some 20km southeast of Waegan. The KPA deployed four divisions under the I Corps along the western boundary opposite the US divisions. Six KPA divisions of the II Corps were to attack the ROK divisions. The Front Command of the KPA was located in Suanbo, about 100km northwest of Waegan.⁴⁹

As of 4 August 1950, the estimated strength of the KPA was 70,000 men. Since the war began, it had suffered about 58,000 casualties. The crack divisions which spearheaded the invasion suffered especially heavy casualties. The 105th Tank Division was actually reduced to a Tank Regiment. (In fact the 40 remaining tanks in the division could form only two tank companies, according to US Army standards.) The estimated strength of major KPA units as of 4 August was as follows:⁵⁰

Please see over for table.

Unit	Strength
1st Division	5,000
2nd Division	7,500
3rd Division	6,000
4th Division	7,000
5th Division	6,000
6th Division	6,000
8th Division	8,000
12th Division	6,000
13th Division	9,500
15th Division	5,000
105th Tank Division	3,000
603rd Motorcycle Regt.	1,500
766th Unit	1,500

Out of three newly organised divisions from the Security Brigades, two divisions - the 7th and the 9th Divisions - were not available for the August offensive. The 10th Division, organised from the 2nd Democratic Youth Training Centre just before the war, was to arrive on 8th August.

As of 4 August 1950 the total strength of UN ground forces under the command of General Walker was 142,000 men, comprising 83,000 Korean troops and 59,000 American troops. Among the total strength of 142,000 men, combat troops numbered 92,000 men. So the UN ground forces alone outnumbered the KPA by 22,000 men (even without counting the absolute control of sea and air by UN naval and air forces). Major combat units of the UN ground forces and their strengths were as follows:⁵¹

Please see over for table.

Unit	Strength
ROK Army	
1st Division	7,600
3rd Division	8,800
6th Division	5,900
8th Division	8,700
Capital Division	6,600
US Army	
1st Infantry Division	10,300
2nd Infantry Division	5,000
24th Infantry Division	14,500
25th Infantry Division	12,100
1st Marine Brigade	4,900

With the passing of time the gulf in strength between the KPA and the UN Forces became ever greater in the Nakdong River campaign. As of 1 September 1950, the KPA deployed 13 infantry divisions, one tank division, and two tank brigades, totalling 98,000 men. In examining the strength of the KPA divisions, a simple bean-counting is not enough. The KPA maintained the identity of its divisions even after the divisions were reduced to a regiment, or even a battalion force level. (Contrastingly, some ROK divisions which were badly hit in the initial stage of the war were absorbed into other divisions.) So, in order to grasp the real situation of KPA divisions, it is necessary to check the real (remaining) strength of those divisions employed in the battlefield. As of 1 September 1950 major KPA units and their strengths were as follows:⁵²

Please see over for table.

Unit	Strength
I Corps	
6th Division	10,000
7th Division	9,000
105th Tank Div. (20 tanks)	1,000
16th Tank Brig. (43 tanks)	500
9th Division	9,400
104th Security Brigade	2,000
4th Division	5,500
2nd Division	6,000
10th Division	7,500
II Corps	
3rd Division	7,000
13th Division	9,000
1st Division	5,000
105th Tank Div. (20 tanks)	1,000
17th Tank Brig. (43 tanks)	500
8th Division	6,500
15th Division	5,000
12th Division	7,000
5th Division	7,000

Newly formed divisions since late June 1950 maintained a relatively high filling rate. But, the crack divisions which had been engaged in battles continuously since the war began were manned at only half the normal strength. The 105th Tank Division had only 40 tanks left. Two other armoured units - the 16th and 17th Tank Brigades - were formed in late August 1950. These two tank brigades were not the like of the 105th Tank Brigade which had 150 tanks in 1950. Altogether the KPA had about 120 tanks. By US Army standards, these 120 tanks could form only two tank battalions. (One US tank battalion had 68 tanks.)

In the same period, the UN Forces in Korea totalled 178,900 men, out of which combat troops numbered 124,000 men. Five ROK divisions had 52,500 men whereas four US divisions plus one marine brigade had 66,200 men. The 27th UK Brigade had 1,600 men. As of 1 September 1950 major UN units and their strengths were as follows :

Please see over for table.

Unit	Strength
ROK Army	
Capital Division	16,400
1st Division	10,500
3rd Division	7,200
6th Division	9,300
8th Division	9,100
US Army	
2nd Infantry Division	17,500
24th Infantry Division	14,700
25th Infantry Division	15,000
1st Cavalry division	14,700
1st Marine Brigade	4,200
UK	
27th Brigade	1,600

Compared with the 1st KPA Division which had only 5,000 men remaining, the 2nd US Division had 17,000 men. Moreover, the UN divisions were supported by 500 tanks, more than four times as much as KPA tanks. Counting the absolute superiority of UN naval and air forces and overwhelming superiority in artillery, and logistics support, the UN Forces under General Walker were far superior to the KPA, at least in quantitative analysis.⁵³

In spite of the overall superiority in strength and fire power, during August and most of September 1950, the UN Forces in the Naktong River Defence Line were on the defensive, desperately managing to fill the gaps the KPA troops bore out. The worsening situation of the KPA was not accurately known to the UN commanders, who were then evaluating the KPA much higher than was actually the case. The UN soldiers were still caught in a defeatist mood due to the long, painful retreat during July 1950. Even if the UN Forces in Pusan Perimeter had been positive enough to stage a strategic counteroffensive pushing the KPA troops back, it was not the job of these UN Forces in the Pusan Perimeter. A strategic counteroffensive to decisively destroy the invading KPA troops was to be executed by a large-scale landing operation deep in the rear of the enemy - the Inch'on landing. The UN Forces in the Pusan Perimeter had only to

defend the Nakdong River Defence Line, which inevitably meant a concession of initiative to the KPA. As a consequence, the KPA could maintain the offensive against the UN Forces during this period, in spite of much inferior strength, firepower, and logistical support.

From 5 August 1950, the KPA began the August offensive against the UN Forces along the Walker Line. In total 70,000 troops in ten divisions were thrown into this August offensive. The main thrust of the offensive was directed towards Taegu, the provisional seat of the ROK government and General Walker's headquarters. Altogether five KPA divisions were poured towards the UN positions defending the outskirts of Taegu. Two ROK divisions - the 1st and 6th Divisions - and the 1st US Cavalry Division fought these five KPA divisions and repulsed the KPA threat to Taegu by 27 August. In other fronts the KPA offensive came to a halt by 20 August. In the August offensive the KPA divisions suffered a heavy blow. The force-level of each division was reduced to an average of 5,000 men. The crack 4th Division was reduced to a strength of 3,500 men. The 12th Division lost all but 1,200 men. The KPA divisions in the northern front succeeded in pushing the ROK divisions 20-30km south. However, through this withdrawal, the ROK divisions could fill the gaps between divisions more tightly because the defence frontage for the ROK divisions shrank from 150km to 90km.

From 31 August the KPA began the September offensive. Altogether 98,000 troops in 13 divisions, supported by 120 tanks were thrown into this last, desperate offensive. To prepare for this offensive, the KPA halted the August offensive at around 20 August. To make up for the loss in the August offensive the KPA mobilised 'volunteers' from occupied south Korea. More than one third of the 98,000 troops who took part in the KPA September offensive were these south Korean 'volunteers'. The KPA divisions lost too many veteran soldiers in the August offensive. Naturally, the south Korean volunteers in the KPA divisions were not ardent and experienced soldiers. So the KPA strength in the September offensive, 98,000 men, was not a big addition to the strength in the August offensive, 70,000 men.

For the September offensive 13 KPA divisions were organised into five assault groups. Each assault group was assigned to one major route heading towards Pusan. Each group was to stage a frontal attack against opposing UN defence positions. And if a group succeeded in breaking through it was to exploit the breakthrough for itself. There was no sizable strategic reserve for the Front Command to exploit the success which each assault group attained. These frontal attacks along the whole front were reminiscent of the initial war plan of the invasion. In June 1950, the frontal attacks which assigned each of seven assault divisions to one invasion route could succeed because of the overwhelming superiority of the KPA over the ROK Army. However, in the September offensive, the KPA was outnumbered in strength and overwhelmed in firepower and logistical support. In this adverse situation, to attain economy of force the KPA leadership should have concentrated assault divisions on one or two objects.⁵⁴

That the KPA leadership did not observe this principle of war was one of the main causes of the eventual failure of the September offensive. On the other hand there was a possibility that the KPA leadership should have worried that too much concentration of force would offer the UN Forces a good target for air bombing or artillery barrage. (On 16 August, 98 B-29s of the US FEAF executed a carpet-bombing over Waegan, supposedly the operation base of the KPA divisions attacking Taegu. It was the biggest employment of airpower in direct support of ground forces since the Normandy invasion.)⁵⁵ In reality, the only hope that the KPA leadership could have was that the UN command should have failed to use its reserves effectively to recover the gaps brought about by the assaulting KPA divisions. The hope did not materialise, to the end, due to the superb employment of reserves by General Walker.

The highlight of the KPA September offensive was the battle of Yongch'on during 2-12 September 1950. Yongch'on was the axis of the northern front defended by ROK divisions. By occupying Yongch'on, the KPA could divide the ROK defence line into two and could advance to

the rear of Taegu, the nucleus of the Nakdong River Defence Line. On 6 September the 15th KPA Division succeeded in occupying Yongch'on by a lightning strike. The UN Command estimated this situation as the worst crisis in the Nakdong River operation. Major-General Yu Chae-hung, commanding the II ROK Corps, counterattacked with six regiments. On 10 September, the II ROK Corps recovered Yongch'on and by 12 September regained the original defence line. That the 15th KPA Division could not exploit the success of Yongch'on revealed the limit of the fighting power of the KPA divisions and the mistake in the KPA leadership's conduct of the September offensive. As they were not backed up by strategic reserves and logistical support, each assault group was unable to exploit their initial successes and were halted by UN Forces' counterattack and were eventually forced back to the departure line of the attack. By 12 September the KPA September offensive had ended in failure.⁵⁶

With the failure of the September offensive, the initiative of the war which the KPA had taken since 25 June was turned over to the UN Forces. Most of the veteran KPA soldiers who crossed the 38th parallel on 25 June had been consumed in the war of attrition during early July to mid-September 1950. (In the September offensive alone, the KPA was estimated to have lost about 30,000 men.)

At the height of the KPA September offensive, on 8 September Kang Gon, Chief of Staff of the Front Command and Chief of the General Staff, was killed in action. Due to this sudden death of Kang Gon, a major reshuffle in the Front Command and army corps commands became inevitable. Kim Ung, Commander of the I Corps, was made Chief of Staff to Kim Ch'aek, in place of Kang Gon. In Kim Ung's place, Yi Kwon-mu, Commander of the 4th Division, was elevated. Pak Ch'ang-dok succeeded Yi Kwon-mu as Commander of the 4th Division. Kang Gon's death was a heavy blow to the morale of the KPA leadership. His loss was deeply mourned by the North Korean leadership. (Later, the 1st Central Military Academy was renamed Kang Gon Military Academy.) In a sense, Kang Gon's death symbolised the gloomy situation of the KPA during this period.⁵⁷

Throughout this war of attrition in the late summer of 1950, the only option the KPA could take not to lose the war was to continue the offensive in the Nakdong Perimeter at any cost. The disparity in strength between the KPA and the UN Forces was increasing with the passing of time. For the KPA, there was no hope, no way of reversing this trend. The sea and air was under absolute control of the UN Forces. The logistic line was too extended. Reserves were running out. In this situation, it was fully anticipated that the UN Forces could launch a strategic counteroffensive by sea or tactical counterattacks by air in the rear of the KPA. The North Korean leadership were greatly concerned about these contingencies. Though, what really mattered was the resources at their disposal, not the apprehensions of these possibilities. They were not in a situation to strengthen their defense posture along the coast by pulling frontline troops out of the Nakdong River Line. This could jeopardize the offensive while not considerably strengthening defence posture. Therefore they could not help choose one object - to destroy the UN Forces along the Nakdong River Line at any cost.

It was the only way to press the United States and its allies to rethink the wisdom of further engaging in the Korean War. If the UN Forces along the Nakdong River Line had been overridden and Pusan had been occupied by KPA troops, the US government and its allies could hardly have persuaded the people of western countries to support the Korean expedition. To evacuate the ROK government and remaining ROK troops could have been performed on 'humanitarian' grounds.⁵⁸ However, it would have been almost inconceivable to retake the Korean peninsula by using these Korean troops. Militarily, it could have been possible. But, politically, such an enterprise would have been unthinkable. So on the part of the North Korean leadership, to pressure the UN Forces into a 'Dunkirk' was the only way to end the war. The all-out attack along the Nakdong River Line was, again, the best way to reinforce the fragile defence of the coast. Only by continuously pressing UN Forces, could the KPA check the transfer of UN Forces to other fronts, according to their strategic reckoning.

On the other hand, if the UN Forces were to have the resources and nerves to withstand the ferocious KPA offensive along the Naktong River Line and at the same time had reserves to be deployed to other fronts, then that calculation of the North Korean leadership was to be of no avail. The collapse of the KPA would be inevitable. The logic of the UN Forces' Inch'on landing was based on these calculations. The significance of the Inch'on landing was not that it was a superbly executed 'surprise'. General MacArthur's excellence was in his use of strategic reserves. He believed that General Walker could hold out in the Pusan Perimeter. Based on this confidence, MacArthur was determined to spare the strategic reserves for a decisive counteroffensive. An ordinary general would have consumed these strategic reserves to reinforce the Pusan Perimeter defence. General MacArthur had the penetration to see that, by the end of July, the worst time was over. He also had the determination to act on this judgement. The Naktong River campaign of August to September 1950 was a confrontation of those two strategic calculations - by the North Korean leadership and General MacArthur.

The Unacceptable Defeat

The course of the Korean War turned round 180 degrees with the UN Forces' Inch'on landing on 15 September 1950. The UN Forces could take the offensive, pushing the KPA to the defensive. To properly understand the significance of the landing operation and the following development of the war it is necessary to examine the strategic logic of the landing operation. First of all, the Inch'on landing was not a total surprise as has usually been thought. In his inspection tour of the war situation at the southern bank of the Han river on 29 June, General MacArthur reached two conclusions; (1) only massive introduction of US ground forces could save South Korea from total conquest by the KPA; and (2) the decisive counteroffensive to repel the KPA troops across the 38th parallel should be executed in the form

of a large scale landing operation deep in the rear of the advancing KPA troops.⁵⁹

Upon his return to Tokyo General MacArthur gave instructions to begin planning for an amphibious operation against the west coast of Korea. His initial amphibious plan, code named 'Bluehearts', was scheduled for 22 July 1950. But the continuing collapse of the Korean front rendered Bluehearts impossible by 10 July. The Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG), the Far East Command, had to discard plan after plan during July and August 1950 due to the impending situation in the Korean front. On 16 September the 'Chromite' operation, an amphibious landing at the port of Inch'on on 15 September by the X US Corps, was finally approved by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. That General MacArthur would execute such a large amphibious operation sooner or later was almost an open secret among military experts. There was effectively no way to keep absolute security on such a large-scale operation, employing 70,000 troops and more than 200 ships. In fact, the KPA was notified of the whole amphibious plan by a Japanese spy group a week before the Inch'on landing.⁶⁰ The problem for the KPA leadership was that they had no resources to effectively defend against the incoming UN amphibious forces. And they were reluctant to pull KPA troops from the Naktong River Line to reinforce the defence of the Inch'on area. General MacArthur was well aware of the KPA leadership's dilemma and exploited it to the full.

During July and August 1950 the security of the rear area of the advancing KPA troops was the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. As the security brigades had assumed the security and defence missions along the 38th parallel before the outbreak of the war, during the KPA advance, the security troops of the Ministry of the Interior were alleviating the burden of the regular KPA troops. A Front Area Security Command was organised under the command of Pak Hun-il, Chief of the Constabulary Division of the Interior Ministry. With the advance of KPA troops a security unit of regimental size was deployed to each occupied province. By the end of August 1950

altogether eight security regiments and one security brigade were deployed throughout the occupied areas of south Korea. On 28 August an Inch'on Area Defence Command was organised under the command of Pak Hun-il. To the Inch'on Area Defence Command the following units were assigned': the 64th Coast Defence Regiment; the 106th and 107 Security Regiments; one independent tank regiment; and a battalion from the 18th Infantry Brigade.⁶¹

On 11 September 1950, the defence responsibility for Inch'on and its adjacent area was transferred to the Seoul Defence Command, under Ch'oe Kwang. The Seoul Defence Command was placed under the West Coast Defence Command. Ch'oe Yong-gon, Minister of National Defence was appointed Commander of the West Coast Defence Command. As such, as of early September, the North Korean leadership was clearly aware of the imminent, large scale amphibious landing operation by the UN Forces at Inch'on. For tangible evidence, Operation Order No.4 issued by the Inch'on Area Defence Command, instructed subordinate units to complete coastal defense facilities around Inch'on area by 15 September.⁶² So it is not the case that North Korean leadership was taken by surprise at the Inch'on landing. The problem was that the troops and materials available for the defence of Inch'on were too limited for staging a successful defence against overwhelming UN Forces.

The landing operation of the UN Forces ended in a great success, taking Inch'on on the day of the landing. However, the success of the landing did not bring about the immediate collapse of the KPA troops. From 15 to 28 September, the KPA troops under Ch'oe Yong-gon's command staged a stiff resistance. The X US Corps liberated Seoul only on 28 September, in two weeks from the Inch'on landing. The KPA troops under Kim Ch'aek's command in the Naktong River Line were resisting the UN Forces until 23 September when Kim IlSung ordered the general withdrawal of the KPA troops in the Basic Front (The Naktong River Line). A synthesis of available sources indicates that, for a week after the Inch'on landing, the North Korean leadership was still attached to maintaining two fronts in south Korea, by securing Seoul

at any cost and maintaining the 'Basic Front', (at worst, at the Kum River-Sobaek Mountains line). According to this plan, the West Coast Defence Command was to eliminate the salient in the Seoul-Inch'on area while the Front Command was to absorb the thrust of the UN Forces advancing northward across the Nakdong River Line.⁶³

However, by 22 September, it became evident that it was impossible for the KPA to maintain two fronts in the south. By the order of Kim IlSung on 23 September troops under Kim Ch'aek's command began to retreat from the whole Nakdong River front. During this retreat operation, most of south Korean volunteers deserted KPA units and most of the heavy equipment was abandoned. More than 12,000 KPA soldiers were captured by UN troops. It is estimated that only 25,000 KPA troops succeeded in reaching the 38th parallel. On 1 October Kim IlSung divided the defence along the 38th parallel into two fronts. Kim Ch'aek and his Front Command was made accountable for the defence of the central and eastern fronts. Ch'oe Young-gon was made accountable for the western front. Together with the defence along the 38th parallel, the North Korean leadership strengthened the defence of Wonsan harbour at the east coast. An East Coast Defence Command was organised under the command of Han Il-mu, Commander-in-Chief of the North Korean Navy. With this arrangement of new command relationship Kim IlSung became more personally involved in the conduct of operations. Until the UN Forces' landing at Inch'on Kim IlSung could delegate much of command authority to Ch'oe Young-gon and Kim Ch'aek. But, with the situation worsening, the war came to require more central operational control. So Kim IlSung had to assume the conduct of operations personally.⁶⁴

On 10 October 1950 troops of the 3rd ROK Division crossed the 38th parallel. On 7 October the United Nations General Assembly endorsed 'all appropriate steps to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea.'⁶⁵ Upon this sanction, the US Army troops crossed the 38th parallel on 9 October. On the east coast, the 3rd ROK Division occupied Wonsan on 10 October. On 19 October, the UN Forces entered P'yongyang. By 26 October troops of the 6th ROK Division arrived at

Ch'osan near the Korean-Manchuria border. The end of the war on the United Nations terms seemed at hand, which was, seen from hindsight, a premature optimism.

In the middle of October 1950, the North Korean leadership took various measures for the future counteroffensive against the UN Forces. The massive intervention of the PLA had already been decided weeks before and in the middle of October the PLA troops were entering North Korea en masse. By 20 October altogether 12 PLA divisions entered North Korea. (On 21 October General MacArthur was proudly declaring the liberation of P'yongyang.) The following various measures which the North Korean leadership took in mid-October 1950 should be understood in connection with this massive intervention of the PLA. Contrary to the UN Command estimate, the North Korean leadership was not at all in a mood to acknowledge their defeat in the war.

On 11 October Kim IlSung made a radio address, titled, 'Let us defend every inch of our motherland at the cost of our blood'. He warned the people that 'The situation at the front is grave'. The enemy is crossing the 38th parallel into the north.⁶⁵ It was apparent that the advance of the US troops across the 38th parallel on 9 October greatly shocked the North Korean leadership. Kim IlSung declared that 'The Korean people are not alone in their struggle for the freedom and independence of the country. All the officers and men of the People's Army, guerrillas behind enemy lines and the entire Korean people should understand that their struggle in the great cause is actively supported and aided by the peoples of the Soviet Union, Chinese People's Republic and other People's Democracies and has the unanimous sympathy of all progressive mankind.'⁶⁶ Kim IlSung's address of 11 October was a manifest expression of the determination of the North Korean leadership to continue the war. It was also a response to the General MacArthur's ultimatum to Kim IlSung on 1 October, which had demanded 'unconditional surrender.'⁶⁷

On 14 October Kim IlSung issued Order 70 to the KPA troops. The order was co-signed by Pak Hon-yong in the capacity of Chief of the General Political Bureau of the KPA. This Order 70 is one of the most important documents in the study of Korean War history: First, Kim IlSung made a self-criticism as follows: (1) We have erred in underestimating the enemy; (2) We have failed to annihilate the enemy, by simply pushing back the enemy instead of a thorough enveloping; (3) Thus, we allowed the enemy to preserve its troops; (4) Some of us had illusionary prospect about the possibility of UN Forces' advance crossing the 38th parallel; (5) Some cadre members did not exhibit model courage before the soldiers in the course of the retreat. Having made this criticism Kim IlSung ordered KPA troops as follows; (1) Never retreat even one step; (2) Deserters from the battlefield shall be executed on the spot; (3) Officers should set an example to the soldiers by leading in the forefront; (4) Political workers should upgrade propaganda activities and set an example on the battlefield; (5) Strengthen reconnaissance operations in the rear of the enemy; (6) Commanders above divisional level shall organise supervising corps by 15 October. Order 70 is very suggestive in grasping the situation of the KPA in the course of the retreat and the determination of the North Korean leadership in this period.⁶⁸ (Appendix 6)

A week later, on 21 October, at the meeting of the Political Committee of the Central Committee of the WPK, Kim IlSung made a concluding speech on 'Forming WPK organisations in the People's Army'. (According to this speech the General Political Bureau of the KPA was formally organised on 21 October 1950. But according to 'Order 70', the General Political Bureau had already existed at least since 14 October.) By this decision, party organisations and control in the KPA became much strengthened. Until that time, no party organisations had existed in the KPA except for military academies. At each unit level the cultural department had been responsible for political education of soldiers and for work with the party members. After the war began, military commissars were dispatched to the KPA units to strengthen party leadership and political education in accordance with the wartime conditions. Kim IlSung acknowledged that in the process

of the war, particularly during the retreat, the leadership came to keenly feel the necessity of forming party organisations and enhancing their role in the army. Since new divisions were being organised in October 1950, there was a strong need to intensify the party's role and firmly equip the soldiers politically.⁶⁹

The Cultural Training Bureau of the Ministry of National Defence was reorganised into the General Political Bureau. Cultural departments in all echelons were reorganised into political departments. A post of assistant commander in charge of political affairs was set up in every unit above company level. Party organisations were also organised above the company level. In the company a party cell was organised. In the battalion and in the regiment a party committee was organised. These party organisations were guided by the political departments concerned. At the division, the corps, and the Ministry of National Defence levels, ad hoc committees to discuss and decide on party organisations problems were set up. So the KPA came to have, from mid-October 1950, the typical political control system common to communist countries.⁷⁰

Before and during the first three months of the war, the cadres of the KPA had been mostly filled with Kim IlSung's followers. Especially the leaders of the KPA were the most faithful lieutenants of Kim IlSung among the North Korean leadership structure. So the need for a strict political control system paralleling with the normal command structure was not strongly felt. The surveillance of the political defence department in the KPA was mainly towards non-party members in the People's Army rather than high-ranking officers. However, as the KPA was to expanding with many make-shift units in October to November 1950, the ratio of crack, faithful officers among the cadres of the KPA was reduced, particularly among mid-ranking officers. The strengthening of party organisations in the KPA since mid-October 1950 was mainly meant to make up for this eroding homogeneity of the cadre members of the KPA.

At the same time, the North Korean leadership endeavoured to rebuild the battered KPA divisions and to form more divisions from available sources. At that time it was estimated that KPA troops which had escaped from the pursuit of the UN Forces did not exceed 25,000 men. To make up for this huge loss two sources were available for the KPA. One way was to enlist party and government officials. Through this method, mid-ranking officers and political workers in the KPA could be raised. However, to raise combat troops was another matter. Conscripted 'volunteers' could not make seasoned soldiers in a short time. The North Korean leadership turned its attention to the Koreans in southern Manchuria. Between July 1949 and April 1950 30,000 Korean veterans in the PLA had entered North Korea to form the three crack KPA divisions - the 5th, 6th and 7th (later 12th) Divisions. In late 1950 it was estimated that there was still a large pool of Korean veterans who were living an ordinary life in Manchuria. The North Korean leadership decided to make use of these veteran Koreans to make up for the loss of the KPA. On the exact timing, size, and procedure of the repatriation of these Manchurian-Koreans into the KPA, available materials are very limited as yet. It is alleged that altogether 70,000 men were conscripted to reinforce the KPA during October and November 1950.⁷¹ (So in the Korean War, the Koreans in Manchuria contributed almost 100,000 veteran soldiers to the KPA.) In order to conscript these Manchurian-Koreans, Ch'oe Yong-gon was dispatched to southern Manchuria. With him such members of the Yen-an group as Mu Chong, Bang Ho-san, and Kim Ch'ang-dok were dispatched to raise the new army.⁷²

To streamline the command relationship of rapidly expanding KPA, six army corps were newly organised in mid-October 1950, in addition to the existing two army corps - the I Corps and the II Corps. Each army corps was to control two or three divisions instead of six or seven divisions as in the cases of former I Corps and II Corps. Mostly divisional commanders in the first four months of the war were appointed commanders of army corps in mid-October 1950. Yi Kwon-mu, who succeeded Kim Ung on 9 September, was still serving as Commander of the I Corps. Ch'oe Hyon succeeded Mu Chong as Commander of the II

Corps. Kim Kwang-hyop, formerly Commander of the II Corps, subsequently Chief of Staff of the II Corps, and then Commander of the 1st Division, was appointed Commander of the III Corps. Yu Kyong-su, formerly Commander of the 105th Tank Division, was appointed Commander of the IV Corps. The V Corps was under the command of Pang Ho-san, formerly Commander of the 6th Division. Ch'oe Yong-jin, Commander of the 13th Division, was appointed Commander of the VI Corps. Yi Yong-ho, Commander of the 3rd Division, was appointed Commander of the VII Corps. Kim Ch'ang-dok, Commander of the 5th Division, was elevated to Commander of the VIII Corps.⁷³

On 14 October, after having taken these measures, the North Korean government left P'yongyang for Kangge, in the mountainous area of North P'yongan Province. Kangge was to be the provisional seat of the North Korean government for two months. In this situation, the North Korean leadership made an extraordinary decision to leave an army corps - the II Corps under Ch'oe Hyon, in the mountainous area of the central part of North Korea, in order to form the 'Second Front'. While the UN Forces were advancing along the eastern and western road routes northward, a sizable unit of seasoned KPA troops were advancing southward along the central mountain routes. The UN intelligence sources did not notice these menacing KPA troops at that time properly. Mostly caught in a jubilant mood expecting 'the Thanksgiving day at home', the UN Command committed grave errors in estimating the intent and capability of the KPA in late 1950.

The devastating effect of the KPA Second Front behind the UN Forces was exhibited strikingly during UN Forces' retreat in December 1950. The troops of the II KPA Corps hit hard the flank and rear of the retreating UN Forces, in accordance with the pressing PLA strength. Every time the UN Forces tried to halt and form a defence line, the KPA troops of the II Corps hit the flank and back of the UN Forces. Met by this unexpected embarrassment several times, the retreating UN Forces began to panic. The shameful collapse of the UN Forces in December 1950 was much affected by this largely psychological effect of the Second Front KPA troops, as well as the

overwhelming superiority of the PLA troops. The North Korean accounts of the Second Front in this period tend to exaggerate the contribution of Ch'oe Hyon's troops too much.⁷⁴ Even taking this factor into account, there is no denying that the activities of the II KPA Corps were a hard blow to the UN Forces. Had the UN Forces staged more orderly delaying actions in confronting the PLA troops, and had they been able to halt the advance of PLA troops at some line in North Korea, for instance, the Ch'ongch'on River line or P'yongyang-Wonsan line, the political and opinion leaders of the United States and its allies would not have been so badly demoralized on the possibility of a military solution of the Korean issue in December 1950. And if it had been so, MacArthur would not have had to advocate such a drastic measure as the expansion of the war into China proper, most likely to save his face.⁷⁵

That the KPA could form the Second Front in the rear of the advancing UN Forces was largely owing to the complacency and misjudgment of General MacArthur in the aftermath of the liberation of Seoul. After the Eighth US Army under General Walker reached Seoul from the Naktong River Line, MacArthur ordered another large-scale amphibious operation, using the X US Corps, at the harbour of Wonsan on the east coast of North Korea. But while the X US Corps was still afloat, Wonsan had already been liberated by the 3rd ROK Division on 10 October. The X Corps landed at Wonson only on 26 October. So MacArthur had idly kept a 70,000 strength force unused for a couple of weeks. To make matters worse MacArthur did not make a proper arrangement to achieve unity of command in the Korean theatre. In the western sector, the Eighth US Army under General Walker was advancing towards the Yalu River. In the eastern sector the X US Corps and the I ROK Corps were advancing towards the Tumen River. All these Forces, MacArthur commanded directly from Tokyo. This kind of command relationship was not an effective one in coping with the rapidly changing war situation in this period. Moreover, between the Eighth US Army and the X US Corps, there was a gap of over 150km frontage. MacArthur did not take necessary measures to cover this frontage. So the right flank of the 8th US Army and the left flank of the X US

Corps were exposed to the enemy. The II KPA Corps could operate in this gap.⁷⁶

The UN Force's 'Thanksgiving offensive' ended in disaster in early December 1950. From this time on, for about a month, the famous, heartbreaking retreat of the UN Forces was forced by PLA and KPA troops. On 6 December, P'yongyang was restored by PLA and KPA troops. By 24 December the communist troops reached the 38th parallel, thus making a return to a divided Korea. The rest of the war was to be a war of no winners even though it continued for another 31 months and cost hundreds of thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of dollars. So, as far as the KPA was concerned the end of 1950 was an appropriate point to mark an era in its history.

At the Third Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the WPK during 21-23 December 1950, Kim IlSung summed up the past course of the war and gave instructions to remedy defects in the conduct of the war, revealed in the past six months. His sharp self-criticism could serve as a good summary of the North Korean leaders' defects in the conduct of the war. Kim IlSung pointed out the following. First, we did not prepare enough reserves for the fight against the United States. We did not anticipate many difficulties in our way, nor make good preparations for overcoming them. Second, we did not foresee that since our army was inexperienced and its cadres were young, it would not have that much sense of organisation to tide over difficulties facing them. Third, the discipline of the units was weak. Fourth, we failed to wipe out the enemy and merely dispersed or repulsed them. Fifth, our army did not know how to wage battles against an enemy with superior air, naval and ground forces. Sixth, popular revolt to be led by south Korean communists which we had expected did not materialise. Seventh, supply service for the front was not satisfactory. Eighth, political work in the army was not carried out at a high level and the education of soldiers in revolutionary patriotism was insufficient. Kim IlSung's speech was a thorough-going self-criticism covering almost all the aspects of the

preparation and conduct of the war. So it was itself a conclusive verdict on the KPA's trials in the six months course of the war.⁷⁷

The Korean War revealed the limited calibre of the KPA leadership in their preparation for, and conduct of the war. To do justice to the KPA, the war which had developed into a major international conflict, was beyond the capability of the KPA. However, the complacency, and lack of flexibility and creativity of the KPA leadership was no less responsible for the eventual failure of the invasion than their political misjudgement. So far the myth that the KPA was a first-rate army exceeding by far the standards anticipated of an 'oriental indigenous army' in the initial phase of the war has been maintained. North Korean historiography has nurtured such a myth consistently. Many western military experts and scholars have also perpetuated this myth, largely shocked by the poor performance of the US troops in the first month of the war. However, close examination of the performance of the KPA casts serious doubts on such a claim. It is true that tactically many KPA units performed very well. However, such tactical successes were not channeled into a major strategic breakthrough during the summer of 1950. Such defects in the strategic direction of the KPA should be given more attention in examining the causes of the KPA débâcle in late 1950. Not only political misjudgement but also strategic misconduct were central in the failure of the North Korean invasion of 1950.

CONCLUSIONS

The organisers of the KPA started to raise an armed force as an assertive instrument of policy. Unlike the ROK Army which started as a constabulary for reinforcing the police, and was incessantly engaged in quelling internal turbulence during the 1945-50 period, the KPA was, during the same period, being reserved and strengthened for the decisive role in the south-north confrontation. The organisers of the KPA were aware of what a regular army was and what conditions and procedures were needed to raise a regular army. To have a clear conception of these matters and managerial capabilities to steer those projects through were a forgotten aspect of statecraft for the ruling elite of Korea for the last several hundred years. The North Korean leadership, largely owing to Soviet guidance, was awakened to see that 'war is a continuation of politics by other means, and 'the army is a valuable tool of policy.' The KPA was a product of this new breed of Korean ruling elite.

The KPA was the bastion of Kim IlSung and his followers. The dominant position of the Kim IlSung group in the making and running of the KPA was from the beginning guaranteed by the Soviet occupation authorities. In the cases of the party and the government the Soviet occupation authorities recruited Koreans relatively widely. Kim IlSung was their chief agent. The Soviet authorities could not deal alone with the sheer volume of work in the day-to-day business of the party and the government. There was also a need to disguise a 'people's democracy' for the time being by incorporating various elements other than the Kim IlSung group and the Soviet-Korean functionaries. But, in the case of the KPA, there was no impending need to improvise an army hastily in the circumstances in which the Soviet troops were guaranteeing external security and the vast police system was maintaining internal security effectively. And the army should not be a sort of united front incorporating various communist

groups. In this context, the Soviet occupation authorities and Kim IlSung preferred to build a people's army step-by-step, centred around the Kim IlSung group. In accordance with this policy, most of Kim IlSung's followers came to have jobs in the people's army, rather than in the party or in the government. With the expansion of the people's army, many Yen-an-Koreans were channelled into the KPA and made a great contribution to the people's army. However, the dominant position of the Kim IlSung group in the KPA was not threatened by this large influx of heterogeneous elements into the KPA.

The KPA espoused an army of the people. It goes without saying that any national army, at least in theory, professes itself to serve the people. However, the reason why the KPA was designated as such - the Korean People's Army - needs close examination. In the communist jargon, the people does not mean the whole people of a nation. The people, in the communist usage, excludes those who fall under the category of the oppressors. So the naming of the KPA itself had the implication that the KPA was a revolutionary army under the command of the communist party which was the vanguard of the revolution. In other words, the KPA was (and is) the army of the Workers' Party of Korea. The State of North Korea could cease to exist. But it does not necessarily mean that the KPA would pass over with the state. As long as the party survives and continues to operate, the KPA, as the army of the party, should continue to exist. This was (and is) the raison d'etre of the KPA.

In the mid-1970s, the North Korean leadership changed the founding date of the KPA from 2 February 1948 to 25 April 1932. (On 25 April 1932, Kim IlSung was allegedly said to have formed an Anti-Japanese Guerilla Army in Antu, southern Manchuria, with 18 hand-picked young fighters.) This change was part of a campaign to upgrade the personality cult of Kim IlSung. Looking at things objectively, it is unacceptable that the KPA was founded by Kim IlSung in 1932. But, considering that the KPA has been so heavily dominated by Kim IlSung and his followers since late 1945, it is, in a sense, understandable to seek the origins of the KPA in the early days of this group. In

reality, the examination of the early days of this group is the key to the proper understanding of the KPA.

Most of the cadres of the KPA were from the lower classes of the Korean people in terms of social and educational backgrounds. Kim IlSung, whose father was a doctor and an educator, was an exception to this trend. They were mostly from the Korean peasants, in southern Manchuria in the 1930s who were suffering from both Japanese oppression and feudal landowners. They had experiences of bitter lives from their earliest days. Having these backgrounds, the cadres of the KPA had a deep sense of affiliation with the rank and file soldiers of the KPA who were mostly from the peasants. The fact that officers and soldiers alike were from the grassroots of the society was a unique phenomenon in Korean history. In the dynastic era of Korean history, officers were mostly from the gentry class in the countryside. Officers of the ROK Army in the same period were mostly from middle class or above. In this regard, the KPA was a unique army. The fact that the social and educational backgrounds of the highest leadership were not alien to the grassroots soldiers was to remain a strong point in the KPA.

The incorporation of Korean veterans, who had participated in the anti-Japanese war or the Chinese Civil War, into the KPA was a decisive factor in the building and rebuilding of the KPA in a short time. Those Korean veterans entered North Korea on four occasions during 1946 and 1950. In the spring of 1946, some hundreds of cadre members of the KVA returned to North Korea to add cadre members to the newly organised Security Cadres Training Centers. Kim Ung, later Commander of the II corps, was prominent among them. During July and August 1949, seasoned soldiers in the Chinese Civil War were sent to North Korea to form the 5th and 6th KPA Divisions. The repatriation of Korean veterans remaining in the PLA in April 1950 was one of the last preparations for the invasion of South Korea. During October and November 1950, the severely battered KPA again solicited Korean veterans in Manchuria to rebuild its rank-and-file structure.

Altogether 100,000 Manchurian-Koreans contributed to the formation and operation of the KPA during 1946 to 1950.

Then why did the North Korean leadership depend on the Koreans living in Manchuria so often and so greatly? Since August 1945 Manchuria was legally the sovereign territory of China, whether Nationalist or Communist. So the Korean residents there were strictly speaking foreigners to the North Korean leadership. But, the fact is that the North Korean leadership does not seem to have thought so. It was not simply because they could make use of these Korean veterans easily owing to the influence of the Soviet government over the CCP, or the cooperation of the CCP towards the North Korean leadership. It is most likely that the North Korean leadership had a sense of preemptive rights over the Korean residents in Manchuria, especially during the years in which the sovereignty over Manchuria was not firmly settled between the Chinese competitors. And it was a sense of identification with the Korean residents in Manchuria that induced the North Korean leadership to claim such preemptive rights over those Manchurian-Koreans.

Manchuria had been the theatre of the anti-Japanese struggle for most of the North Korean leaders for decades. Kim IlSung himself had resided in Manchuria more than twenty years. It is understandable that the North Korean leadership with such backgrounds and affiliations with Manchuria should have thought that they had a right to seek help from the Manchurian-Koreans when they were in need. Since the Chinese communist leadership was also well aware of the deep affiliation of the North Korean leaders with those Manchurian-Koreans, they implicitly acknowledged the pre-emptive rights of the North Korean leadership over the Korean veterans in the PLA and residents in Manchuria. Thus the incorporation of those Korean veterans into the KPA was not thought a great 'aid' given by the Chinese communists to North Korea. The introduction of these troops did not effectively strengthen the Chinese lever of influence over North Korea. It was only the massive intervention of the PLA troops which effected an increase in the Chinese influence over North Korea.

The KPA was patterned after the Soviet Army. It was organised, equipped and trained with Soviet doctrine and materiel. It was not only because the Soviet Union was the dominant power in North Korea since 1945. By defeating the German army and the Japanese army in the Second World War, the prestige of the Soviet Army was at its zenith in this period. The 'invincibility' of the Soviet Army and the superiority of Soviet military science were accepted by North Korean political and military leaders almost with awe. It is admissible that in this period the Soviet army was an efficient army hardened and tested by the four years' bitter confrontation with the German Army. But the Soviet Army had developed a tendency, through the war, of depending too much on good but few leaders in the Supreme High Command, Stavka. Army commanders, or in some cases, even front commanders had only to be good tacticians with indefatigable nerves and exalting leadership. As far as the highest leadership consisted of first-rate strategists and operation experts, such limits in field commanders could be made up for to a large extent. However in the case that Stavka failed to prove itself to be the brain of the army, a catastrophe was unavoidable. The humiliating defeats of the Red Army (Soviet Army) at the hands of the German Army in the summer of 1941 was exactly such a case. The KPA was influenced by this Soviet legacy to no small extent.

A weak point of the KPA before the Korean War was that it did not effectively develop an able General Staff, the brain of the army. It was largely due to the fact that the Soviet military missions were effectively functioning as the General Staff of the KPA in this period. In the formation and development of the KPA Major-General Smirnov and his staff were in charge of formulating policy guidance and detailed programmes. The KPA General Staff under Kang Gon was, in fact, an operating agency to implement these Soviet made policies and programmes rather than a brain of the army. In the formulation of the war plan, Lieutenant General Vasiliev and his staff offered 'service' to the KPA General Staff. While these Soviet military

advisers were effectively acting for the General Staff of the KPA, the brain power of the KPA did not develop in tune with the expansion of the KPA troops. In spite of the rapid growth of the KPA in strength, a war college, a necessity in a modern army, was not formed in the KPA. Three military academies - the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Military Academies - were producing lieutenants year-by-year. But there was no institute for colonels and generals. They were either their own teachers or depended on 'on-the-job training'.

The defect in the brain power of the KPA was revealed with the Korean War developing into a worsening situation for the KPA. The war plan made by the Soviet operation team was itself a complacent one. However, the real test of the brain power of the KPA was the response of the its leadership to the newly developing situation with the UN intervention in the war. As a hypothesis in July 1950 there was still a chance the KPA could have won the war had it adopted itself to the changing situation more flexibly and resolutely. It was evident that with the passing of time the strength of the KPA vis-à-vis the UN Forces weakened. In this rapidly worsening situation, there was only one option left for the KPA so as not to lose the war. It was the 'twenty-four hour a day and seven day a week advance' at any cost.

To implement this new strategy effectively, KPA tactics should also have been changed. Large concentrations of tanks and troops along road routes would inevitably become prey for the UN Air Force. How to achieve concentration of force without such force being targeted by the UN Force was the tactical problem to which the KPA General Staff should have provided an answer. Employment of an unprecedentedly large special force in the rear of the UN Forces was a strong option. During the advance southward in July 1950 the KPA divisions had very often succeeded in breaking through US defence positions by adeptly infiltrating into the flanks and rear of the US divisions, using small-size light infantry units. But these successes remained tactical ones. The KPA should have employed these methods in strategic context. It is no wonder that Kim IlSung later lamented that if he had one light-infantry brigade in July 1950, he should have

taken Pusan. The unique structure and tactics of present KPA, emphasising strategic employment of special forces, is based on this bitter self-criticism of their conduct of the Korean War.

In July 1950, the KPA leadership did not exhibit such necessary flexibility in strategy and tactics. In early July the Soviet operation team left North Korea with the introduction of US ground forces in the Korean theatre. Even if the Soviet operation team had remained in North Korea, it is doubtful whether they could have offered appropriate advice to meet the new situation. They themselves were not top-class staff officers in the Soviet Army. There could not be that many Zhukovs or Vasilievskys. With the Soviet operation team gone, Kim Ch'aek and Kang Gon were responsible for the conduct of operations. As Chief of the General Staff since December 1947, Kang Gon had been closely affiliated with the Soviet military mission and the Soviet operation team more than any other figure among the KPA leadership. During this period Kang Gon was chief liaison officer between the North Korean leadership and the Soviet military missions. It is open to question whether such a deep affiliation with Soviet officers should have rather limited Kang Gon's intellectual flexibility, the crucial quality required of a Chief of the General Staff in an unanticipated crisis. The judgement, from results, is that this 33 year old, KPA Chief of the General Staff does not seem to have achieved the intellectual breakthrough in strategy and tactics which was badly needed in the KPA in the summer of 1950.

If the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950 had ended in a success as was anticipated in the initial war plan, such a defect in the KPA leadership would not have been so manifestly exposed. A 'modern regular army without a war college' is itself a contradiction in terms. Even if the Soviet government was, understandably, not positive in rendering such aid as was needed for developing the intellectual capacity of the KPA it does not exempt the North Korean leadership from the responsibility for failing to develop the brain of the army. In the Korean War many divisional commanders of the KPA proved themselves to be able field commanders. However, their

tactical successes could not make up for the shortcomings in strategic guidance of the highest leadership of the KPA.

Kim IlSung's concluding speeches at the Third Enlarged Meeting of the Central Committee of the WPK during 21 to 23 December 1950 was clear evidence showing that at last the North Korean political and military leadership reached some standard of independent strategic thinking after six months' bitter experience. The forming of the Second Front in the rear of the UN Forces in October 1950 was an earlier sign of this new development. Since the Third Enlarged Meeting of the Central Committee of the WPK in December 1950 the rebuilding of the KPA has been carried out along the lines decided at the meeting. Thus, the bitter experience of the Korean War served the North Korean leadership as a midwife of the truth that an army becomes truly independent only when it has an independent intellectual capacity.

In examining the origins and nature of the Korean War it is a key question as to how to interpret the North Korean decision on the war. One way of thinking is to see the all-out attack against South Korea in June 1950 as the only alternative left to the North Korean leadership regarding the reunification issue. A good embodiment of this interpretation is produced by John Merrill as follows:

North Korean hopes of achieving unification through a united front with opponents of Rhee, through the Soviet initiative for simultaneous troop withdrawals, and through armed guerrilla struggle had been successively dashed. The only weapon remaining was its conventional military force, which held an overwhelming advantage over the south. So long as the guerrilla movement seemed to have a chance of success, the DPRK held back from exercising this option, exhibiting some restraint in the border clashes over the summer of 1949. But by the spring of 1950, a conventional military attack was the only alternative left¹.

To put the conclusion first, I disagree with this line of interpretation on this issue. The invasion of June 1950 was rather the finalisation of the 'southern strategy' which had been pursued through different tactics at different times and situations rather than the only alternative left.

Since 1945, North Korea had been pursuing two basic policy lines - the Democratic Base Line and the United Front Line. The policy goal of these lines was, in short, 'to strengthen the north, and to weaken the south.' The strategies in pursuing this policy goal may well be called the 'northern strategy' and the 'southern strategy' respectively. The northern strategy underwent three phases - the Democratic Reforms in 1946, the transitory stage in 1947-1948, and the economic building stage from 1949. The southern strategy underwent two stages in this period. From late 1945 to late 1947, the North Korean leadership concentrated on a 'Provisional Korean Democratic Government' formula. From early 1948 emphasis moved on to subversive activities to undermine the South Korean government. In terms of their frame of reference the North Korean leadership pursued those two strategies side by side, giving equal weight to them. However in practical terms, they concentrated more concern and resources in strengthening the north first, at least until early 1949. Until that time the North Korean leadership delegated the greater part of the southern strategy to the south Korean communist leadership. From mid-1949, the North Korean leadership assumed the southern strategy by themselves. The intensifying peace offensive and guerrilla provocations from May 1949 was the expression of this upgraded southern strategy.

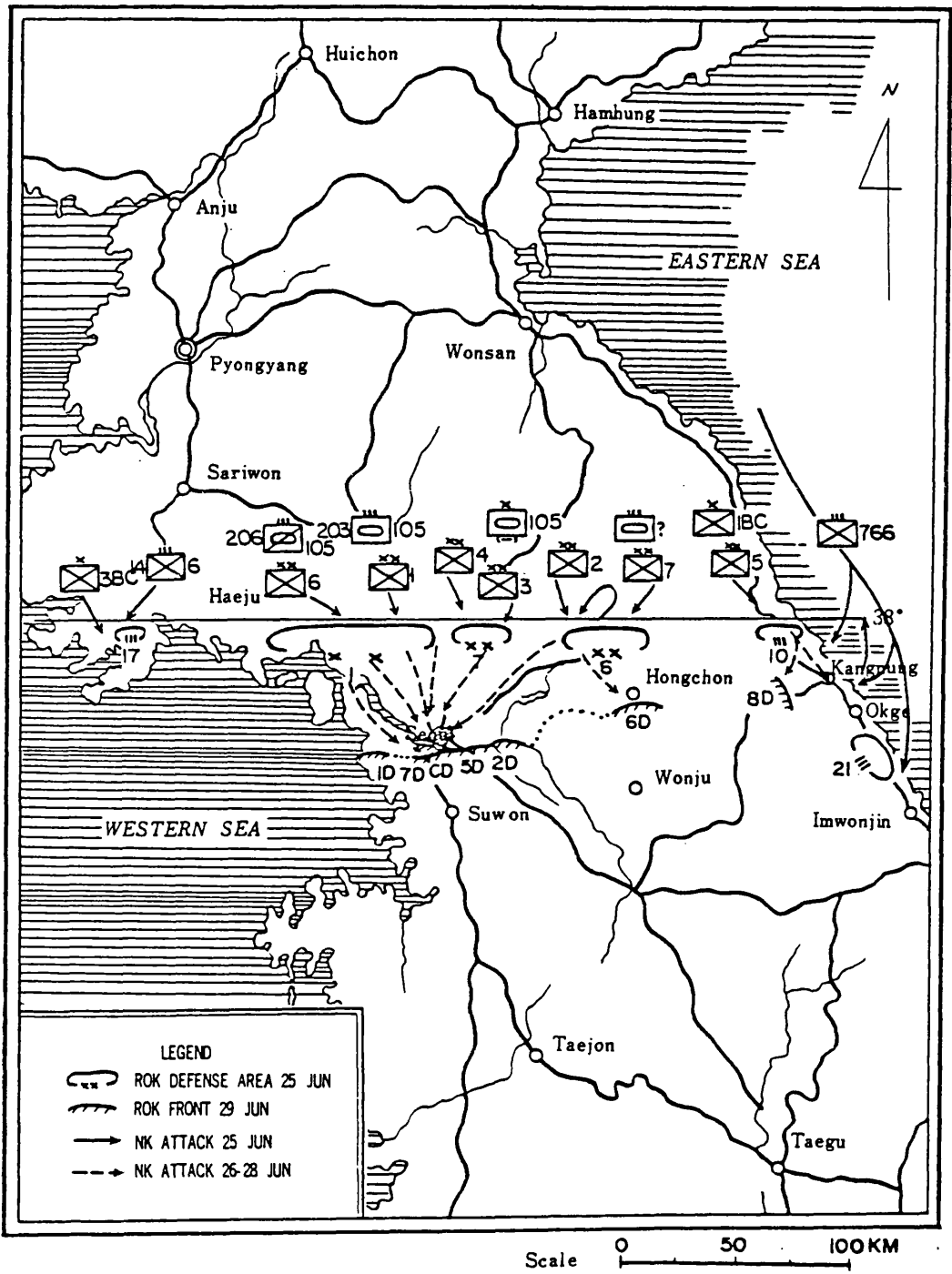
While intensifying the southern strategy, the North Korean leadership did not expect that such undermining activities could alone topple the South Korean government. The North Korean leadership did know well that without a major North Korean initiative, the weakening of South Korea by south Korean communists could not suffice for the achievement of the final goal. The subversive activities and

guerrilla provocations in south Korea were in nature, a subsidiary blow. That is why the North Korean leadership did not give its full weight to guerrilla provocations in the south. While pursuing different tactics subsequently in the southern strategy the North Korean leadership was preparing the finishing touches to the southern strategy. It was the military prowess of North Korea which could be made available by the successful construction of the Democratic Base - North Korea. Entering late 1949, the North Korean leadership began to think that the Democratic Base had been strengthened enough to afford the final blow against the south.

The Korean War decision in the winter of 1949-1950 and subsequent quantum build-up of the KPA could well be understood in this context. The military option was not the last card in the circumstances in which all the other alternatives had been dashed. From the south Korean communists' standpoint the guerrilla activities in 1949 were a bitter setback. But, from Kim IlSung's standpoint, the guerrilla activities attained some results, though not wholly satisfying. Kim IlSung, as a shrewd practitioner of real politics, did not expect the south Korean communists to achieve more than was possible (in his evaluation). In conclusion, the Korean War was not the only alternative left to the North Korean leadership. It was the final blow of the 'southern strategy', made possible by the successful achievement of the 'northern strategy'. The origins of the Korean War should be pursued from many standpoints. But as far as Kim IlSung's reasoning on the war is concerned, this author abides by the above theory.

Appendix 1

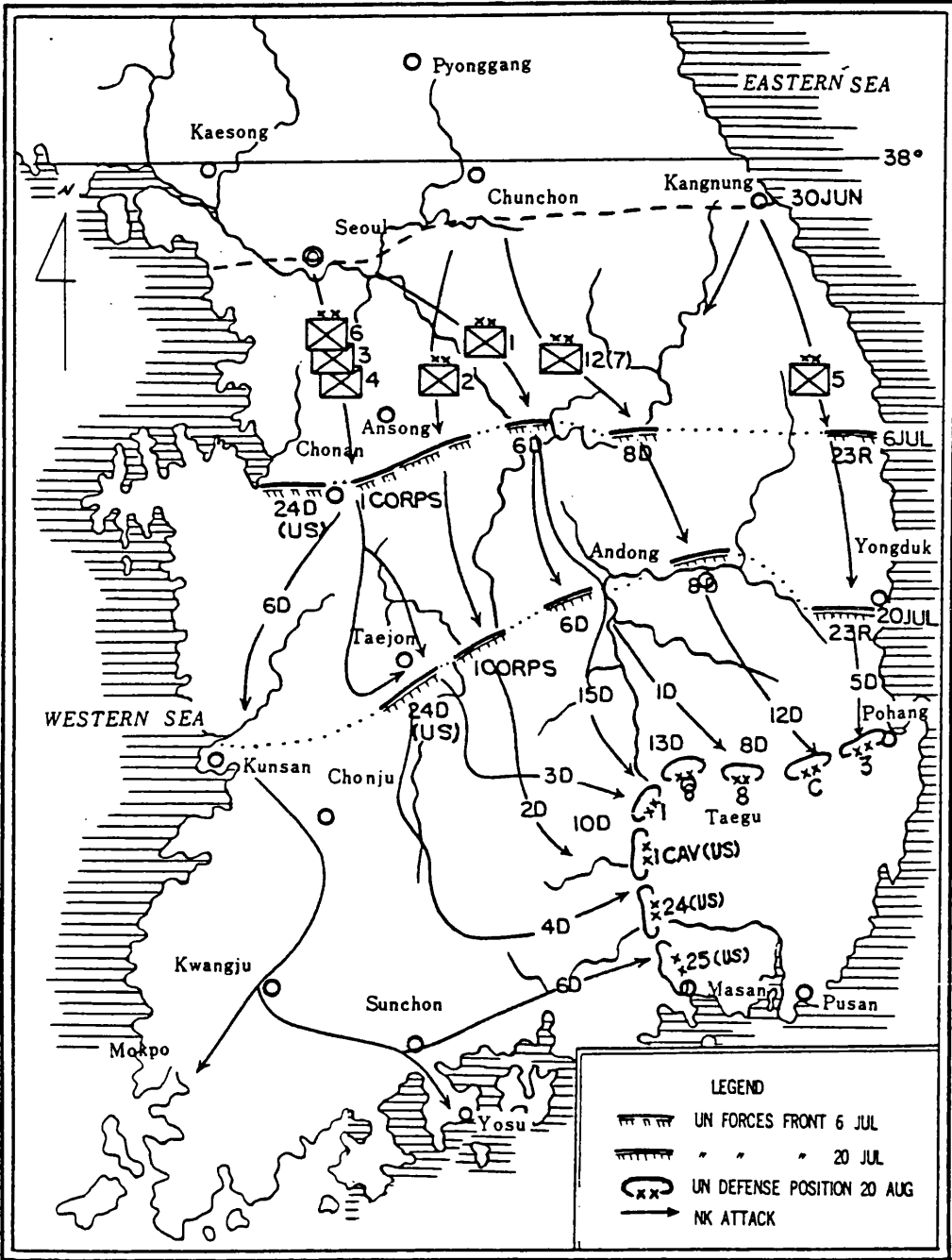
NORTH KOREAN INVASION (25-29 JUN 1950)



Source: ROK Ministry of National Defence.
 THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCES IN THE KOREAN WAR. VOL. IV.

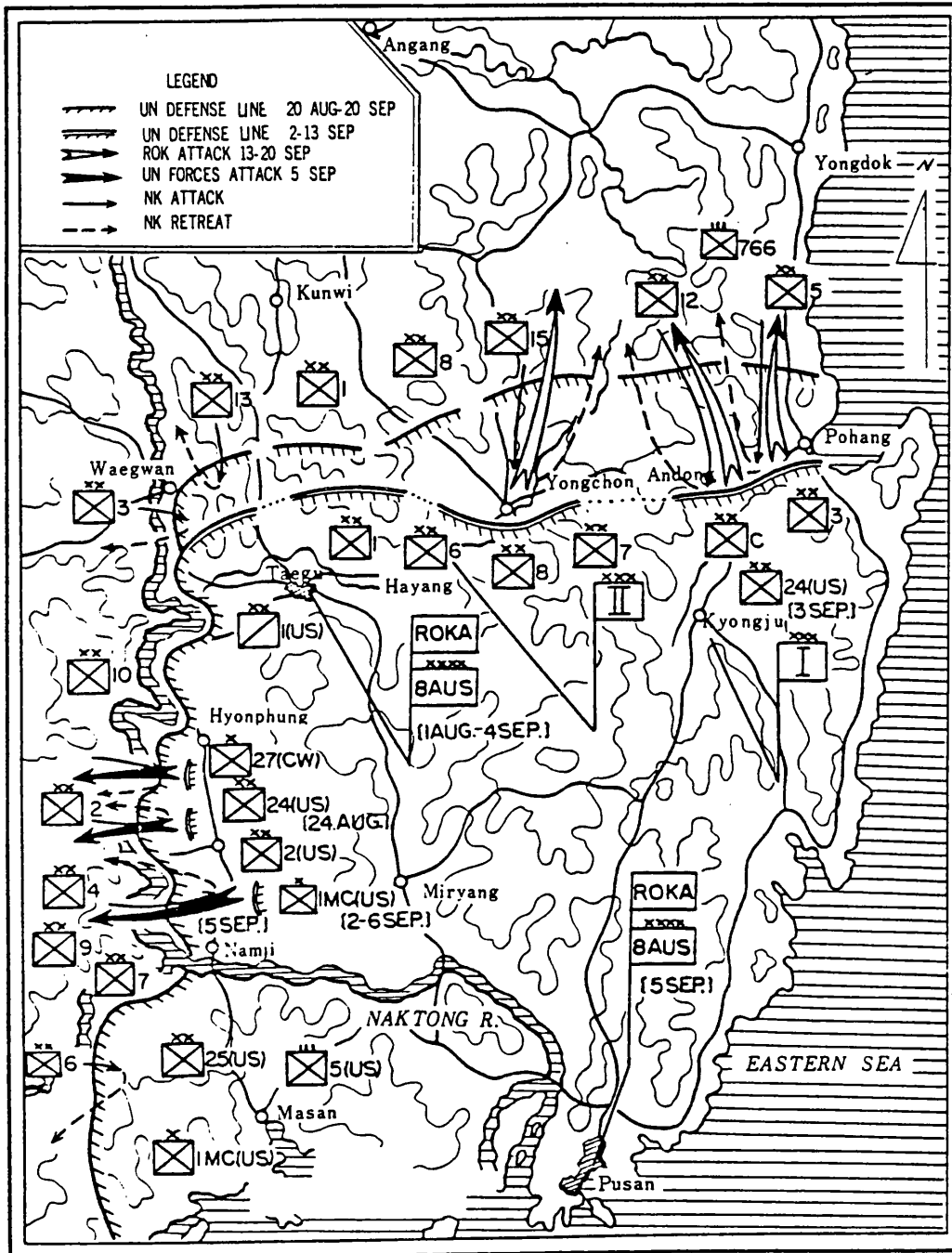
Appendix 2

DELAYING ACTIONS (30 JUN-20 AUG 1950)



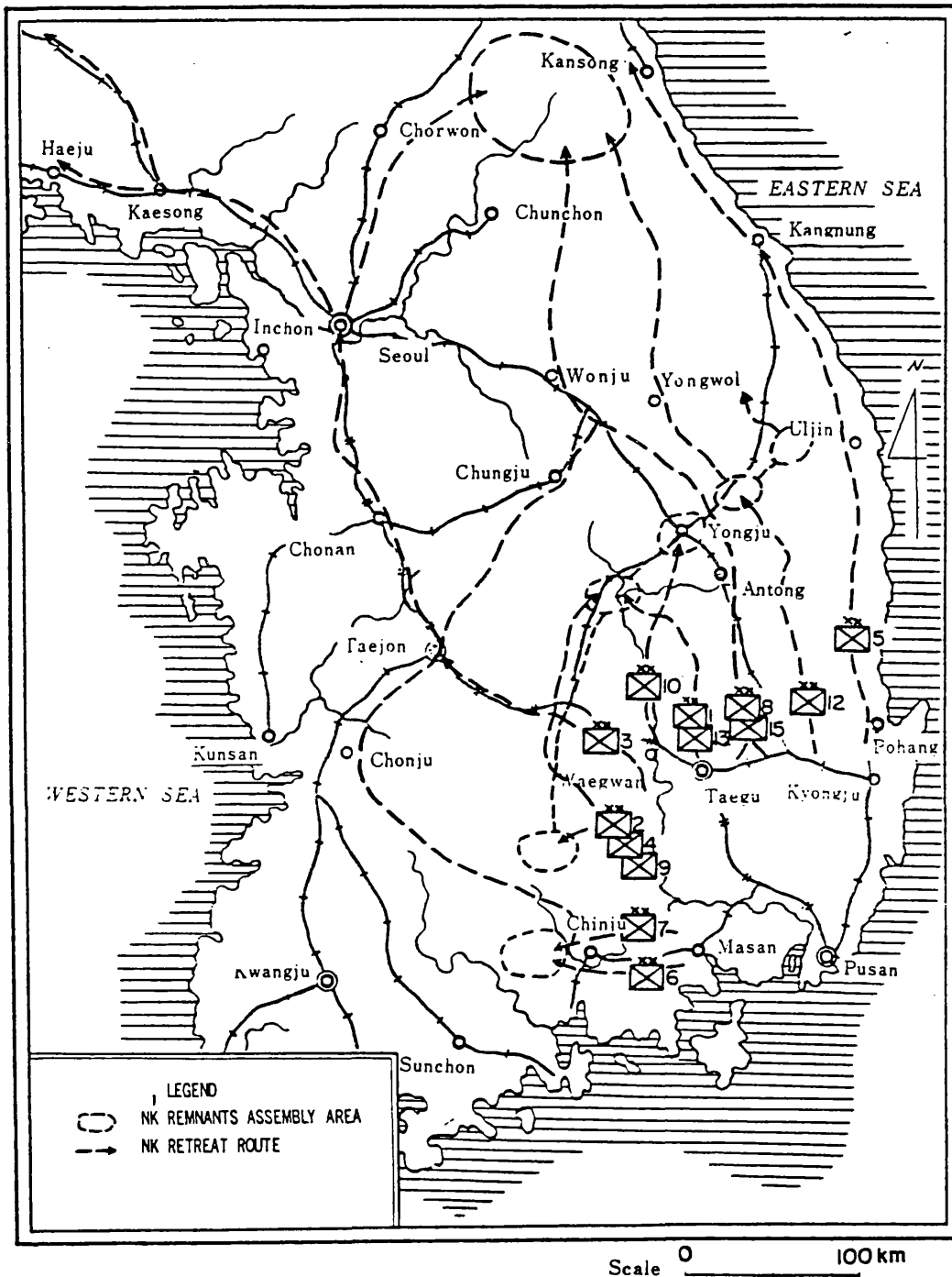
Appendix 3

NAKTONG PERIMETER (20 AUG-20 SEP 1950)



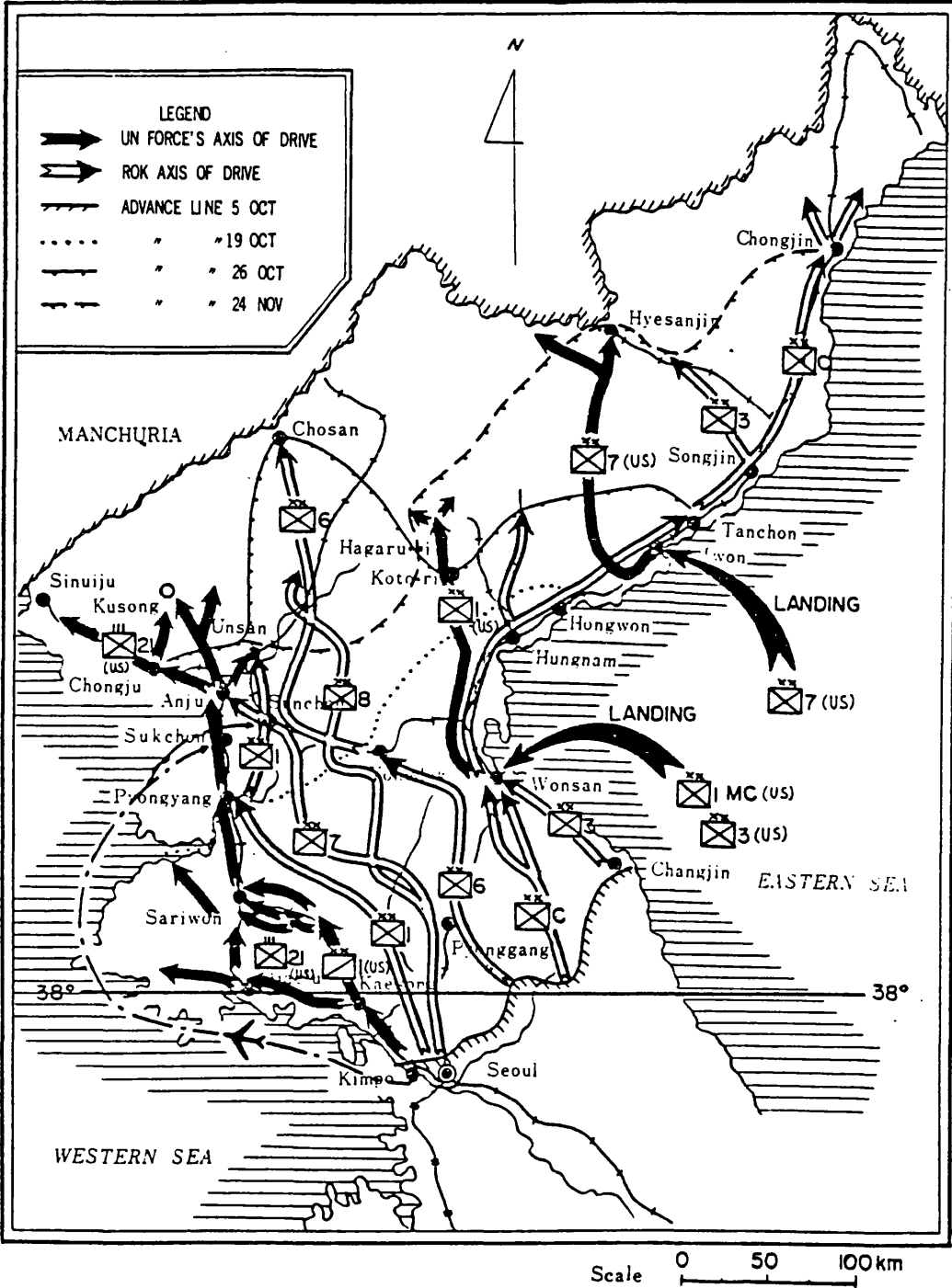
Appendix 4

NORTH KOREAN RETREAT (20 SEP-5 OCT 1950)



Appendix 5

PURSUIT TO NORTH KOREA (5 OCT-24 NOV 1950)



Appendix 6

"Order 70" issued by Kim IlSung on 14 October 1950

1

본명령은 전체군주자
들에게 침투시킨다음
에 11월1일전으로 조
선인민군총정치국 기
요파에 송부할것

조선인민군 최고사령관

명 령

질 대 비 밀

제 0070 호

1950 년 10 월 14 일

지난 6월에 미제국주의자들의 지시에 의하여 우라조국에 동족상쟁의 내란을 도발시킨 리승만파괴군의 불의의 공격을 받고 조국의 독립과 자유와 영예를 위하여 정의의 전쟁에 열거한 조선인민군은 조국과 인민을위한 투쟁에서 전인성과 영웅성과 헌신성을 발휘하였다

조선인민군은 적의 진공을 저지시켰을 뿐만아니라 반공격전으로 넘어가 그를 진멸시킬수있는 능력까지 가지었다는것을 보여주었다 2개월간의 전투에서 조선인민군은 남반부전지역의 92퍼센트 이상을 해방시켰으며 리승만파괴군의 기본력량을 격멸하고 미국무력침공자들의 유생력량과 화력기재에 막대한손실을 주었다

그러나 우리의 많은 군관들과 정치일꾼들은 첫성과들에 대하여 신중하지 못하였으며 첫성과들에 도취함으로써 적의 력량을 과소평가하는 과오를 범하였다

우리의 일부군관들과 정치일꾼들은 조선민주주의인민공화국을 반대하여 미국이 전쟁에 참가한결과 력량비례와 전투행정에서 중요한 변천들이 발생된것을 과소평가하였으며 적군에 세배씩 격면하여 필사적 반항을 조직하리라는것을 타산하지못하였다

그렇기때문에 진공전에서의 첫승리에 도취한 군관들과 정치일꾼들은 진공작전에 있어서 우리의부대들과 연합부대들을 앞으로 있을수있는 적들의 발악적반항에 대비하여 준비시키지못하였다 이와같은 오류들로서는

첫째로 적을 포위 섬멸할대신에 적을 밀고나감으로써 적에게 퇴각하면서 자기의 력량을 보존할 가능성을주었다

둘째로 차지한 전지를 더욱 공고히하며 여러가지 수단을 다하여 즉 전호작업 도로 교차검들에 지뢰를 과묵는것과 우리의 부대들과 연합부대들의 치면을 보장하는것으로써 적의 반격에 상당한 타격을 줄대신에 적의 반격의 시도를 좌절시키지못하였으며 이미 차지한 전지를 보존하지못하였으며 적에게 궤멸적 타격을 주지못하였다

이와같은것은 적으로하여금 우리의 전투전지에 침투하게하며 치면으로 공격을 감행케 하며 우리의 부대들에게 불리한 정세를 조성시킬수있는 가능성을 주었다 또한 이와같은것은 미국침략자들에게 그들이 반격을 개시하기위하여 자기력량을 집중할 가능성을 주었다

미제국주의 침략자들은 조선을 식민지화하며 조선인민을 노예화하려는 본래의 자기목적 달성을 위하여 우리군대를 반대하여 태평양연안에있는 전체 육해공군을 조선전선에 동원하였다

그리하여 지난 1개월동안 조선인민군부대들은 미국침략군에게 강력한 반격을 가하여 적들의 발악적 진공을 격파 분쇄하려고 하였으나 적의 우세한 역량으로 말미암아 38도선으로 후퇴하게 되었다

적들의 진공을 좌절시키는 방어전투에 있어서 우리의 어떤 부대들과 연합부대들은 방이에 준비되지 못하였고 반동분자들이 우리의 군대내부에서 일으키는 혼란에 당황하여 지휘부의 명령이 없이 적에게 진지를 내어줌으로써 적의 진격에 완강한 반격을 가하고있는 우리의 부대들과 연합부대들을 어려운 형편에 처하게하였다

이에 반드시 지적하여야 할것은 우리의 일부군관들과 병사들은 38도선으로 퇴각하는 자기들의 비전고성을 적이 38선 이북으로는 진격하지 않으리라고 미련하게 생각하면서 이를 설명하려하였다

적은 흥악하고 간제하며 그들은 북조선을 점령하려하며 그렇게 함으로써 남조선에 그들이 수립하였던 경찰제도를 북조선에까지 수립하려하여 인민들이 창설한 민주주의제도를 파괴하려한다

우리의 부분적 군관들은 악화된 세정세에 당황하여 적과의 전투에서 비겁성을 나타내며 군대의 지휘를 버리고 적과 투쟁할채신에 병사로 가장하고 은신하였으며 무기를 내어 버리며 전장을 떠어버림으로써 적으로부터 자기의 추악한 생명을 구원하였다

그와같은 부대들의 지휘관들과 정치간부들은 병사들로부터 리탈되었으며 군대내부에서 발생하는 혼란에 대처하여 적절한 방책을 취함으로써 군대의 사기를 양양시키며 경각성을 높이며 비겁자들과 우물분자들을 반격하는등의 투쟁들을 조직하지못하였으며 자기의 부대들을 방어전에 유효 적설하게 동원하지못하였다

이러한 결과에 전선에서는 어려운 정세가 조성되었고 적은 개별적 지점들에서 38도선을 넘어 진격을 계속하고있다 적은 흥악하고 간제하며 그들은 우리의 약점을 리용하여 우리의 부대들이 자기들게게 반항하지않고 창황히 퇴각하는 지점들에서 많지않은 힘으로 공격을 하고있다 그결과 1,700만 이상의 인구가 거주하는 지역이 미제국주의 침략자들에게 강점되었다

적들은 우리인민을 무력으로 정복하고 우리조국을 빼앗으려고한다 조선인민은 우리의 인민군대를 사랑과 존경으로 바라보고있으며 우리인민군대가 미제국주의자들로부터 반드시 조국의 독립과 자유와 영예를 사수할것을 믿고있다

이것은 이미 남반부해방지구에서 전체인민들이 우리의 인민군대를 열광적으로 환영하

며 성심으로 지지 성원한 사실들으로써 더욱 명백하게 되었다 만일 우리의 인민군대가 적에게 계속적으로 지역들을 내여주며 도시와 농촌들을 파괴되게하며 우리의 부모처자들을 무참하게 학살 악형당하게 한다면 전체 인민들이 자기의 무장력인 우리인민군대를 신뢰하지 않을것이며 지지하지 않을것이다

역사적 경험이 가르쳐주는바와같이 어떠한 군대를 물론하고 인민의 지지를 받지 못하는 군대는 어느때든지 승리할수없으며 부여된 자기의 임무를 실천할수없다

조국을 사랑하는 조선인민은 우리조국이 미제국주의 침략자들에게 강점되고 유린당하게되는것을 결코 용서할수없으며 또한 어느때든지 용서하지않을것이다

우리의 인민군대는 종국적승리를 쟁취하는데있어서 필요한 일체조건들을 가지고있다

우리인민군대는 어떻게하든지 미국침략자들의 발악적진공을 저지시켜야하며 일격에 적을 마지막놈까지 우리조국강토에서 격멸소탕하기위한 강력한 반공격준비를 위하여 시간을얼어야 할것이다

지나온 전쟁과정은 미제국주의 침략자들의 어떠한 발악적시도도 조국의 독립과 자유와 영예를위하여 정의의 전쟁에 한사람같이 떨기한 조선인민들의 의지를 꺾을수 없으며 우리의 인민군용사들이 대전부근 전투에서 미군 24·25사단과 금천에서 미군 기갑부대를 격멸시키던것과같이 앞으로 적들을 마지막 한놈까지 우리조국강토에서 성과있게 진멸하리라는것을 보여주었다

적에대한 종국적승리를 위하여 조선인민군전체 전사 하사 군관및 장병들에게 다음과같이 명령한다.

첫째 일보도 퇴각하지말라! 우리에게는 이 이상 더 퇴각할곳이 없다 조국과 인민은 자기의 무장력인 인민군대가 마지막 피한방울까지 다하여 전지를 사수할것을 요구한다

둘째 우울분자 요언분자는 전투에서 위험한 우리의적이다 부대내에 혼란을 일으키며 무기를던지며 명령없이 전투장을 떠나는 자들은 직위여하를 불문하고 모두가 인민의 적으로써 그자리에서 사형할것

셋째 각급 군관들은 일상적으로 전투원들과 접촉하며 직접전투장에서 전투를 지휘할것이며 직접자기의 모범으로써 활발하고 강력한 반공격을 개시하여 육박전으로 적들에게 계속 심중한 타격을 줄것

네째 구분대 부대및 편합부대 정치일꾼들은 군무자들속에서 일상적인 정치교양사업을 전개하며 금후의 후퇴라는것은 죽임과갈라하는 것을 강력히 해석하여줄것이며 그리고 정치일꾼들은 전사들의 전투정신을 백방으로 공고히하면서 전투에서 자기의 모범으로써 전사들을 격려하며 조국을위한 투쟁에서 영웅성과 헌신성의 모범을 그들에게 보여줄것

다섯째 강고한 방어를 확립할 목적으로 연합부대와 부대지휘관들은 일상적으로 적의 후방에 구분대와 정찰대들을 완강하고 꾸준히 계속부절히 침투시키며 신속하고 정확한 정찰을 조직할것

적정에대한 충분하고도 정확한 자료를 신속하게 가지고 있지못한다면 그것은 범죄적이며 비전투적 사실로 인정할것이며 이러한 분자들은 군사재판에 회부하며 처벌부대로 보내는 엄중한 처벌을 실시할것

여섯째 전선또는 전투장에서 도주하는분자 요원분자들을 포착하기위하여 전선또는 군단 사단 지휘관들은 금년 10월 15일 전으로 독전대들을 조직하여 후방계선에서 방어하는 부대들과 연합부대들에 소속시킬것

독전대의 지휘관들은 조국의통일 독립과 자유를위한 전쟁에서 특출하였던 병사 하사관관들을 선발하여 조직할것

독전대 지휘관들에게는 군사검찰소 재판소 일꾼들과함께 전투장에서 도주하는 일체군무자에게 대하여 그장소에서 그들의 죄상에 근거하여 사형 혹은 처벌부대로 넘기며 또는 그들의 원부대로 반송시키는 처벌을 집행하는 권리를 부여할것

일곱째 이명령서를 부대장과 부부대장들을 포함한 전체상급 군관들에게 서명을받고 배포할것이며 이명령서를 받은 군관들은 자기부대들앞에서 명령서를 반드시 랑독하여 이명령서의 의의를 깊이 전체군무자들에게

조선인민군

조선인민군



일
현

성
영



지 령

비밀
부주 No.

조선인민군 최고사령관 명령 제 0070호

집행을위한 사업조직에 대하여

1950 년 10 월 15 일 평양시

조선인민군 최고사령관은 1950년10월14일 전체인민군부대들과 장병들에게 주는 명령을 하달하였다 조선인민군 최고사령관 명령을 철저히 집행하기위하여 다음과같이 지시한다

1. 각련합부대 및 부대장들은 본명령서를 자기부대내 매개군관들에게 서명을받고 전달하거나 혹은 군관들의 대렬앞에서 부대장들이 낭독하는 방법으로써 전달할것이며 명령서의 철저한 실천을위한 광범한 정치 사업들을 보장할것
2. 각련합부대 및 부대장들은 편대 대대 중대 혹은 소대별로 군무자들의 대렬앞에서 최고사령관의 명령을 낭독하고 이 명령에 제기된 과업들을 실천하며 부대 전투력의 강화를 보장할것
3. 각련합부대 및 부대들에서 대대 중대 혹은 소대별로 「군무자회의를」 소집하고 최고사령관의 명령을 마지막 귀한방울까지 다하여 철저히 실행하겠다는것을 맹세하는 결의문 혹은 맹세문을 채택할것
4. 군관들과 정치일꾼들은 최고사령관의 명령을 매개군무자들에게 깊이 인식시키고 그를 철저히 집행시키며 군무자들의 전투기세를 앙양시키며 부대내 「강철같은 군사규율과 조직력을 보장하며 군무자들의 용감성과 헌신성을 발휘시키기 위하여」 광범한 정치사업을 전개 할것이며 군무자들 속에서 부단히 담화를 진행하며 전호 방어진지부대 주둔지역들에서 포어 포스타 전투속보등 「각종 선전」 형식을 리용하여 매개군무자들에게 최고사령관의 명령을 마지막 귀한방울까지 다하여 「반드시」 실천하고야 말겠다는 조국과 인민을위한 고상한 애국적 「각성을」 제고시킬것
5. 최고사령관 명령의 침투 해석을위한 일체사업들을 10월25일까지 보장하며 그집행정형을 매 5일에 「차석」 총정치국에 보고할것 「차보고는 10월20일에 할것

조선인민군

총정치국장

원

영

Notes.

Introduction

1. Jack Saunders, "Records in the National Archives Relating to Korea, 1945-1950," Bruce Cummings (ed.), Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), p.323.
2. The typical case of this explanation is found in Karunakar Gupta, "How Did the Korean War Begin?" China Quarterly, 52 (Oct.-Dec.1972), pp. 699-716.
3. For instance, I.F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952).

Chapter One

Political Setting

1. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.1 (Pyongyang: Choson Nodongdang Ch'ulp'an-sa, 1979), p. 426.
2. Ibid.
3. Statement by Colonel-General Shtykov, Soviet chief delegate to the US-USSR Joint Commission, made on 20 March 1946.
4. Milovan Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, trans. Michael B. Petrovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p.114.
5. For a good discussion of this issue, see Joo-Hong Nam, America's Commitment to South Korea: The First Decade of the Nixon Doctrine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.16.
6. For controversies on the Korean partition issue, see Hak-joon Kim, Unification Policies of South and North Korea: A Comparative Study (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1986), pp. 20-25. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Soon Sung Cho, Korea in World Politics, 1945-50: An Evaluation of American Responsibility (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 47-58.
7. Bohlen minutes on Roosevelt-Stalin meeting, 8 February 1945, in FRUS: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1955), p. 770.
8. See Soon Sung Cho, ch.2.

9. For a good discussion of this topic, see Bruce Cummings, "Introduction: The Course of Korean-American Relations, 1943-1953," Bruce Cummings (ed.), Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-53, pp. 11-16.
10. Briefing Book Paper for Inter-Allied Consultation Regarding Korea, in FRUS: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945, p. 359.
11. A good summary of the future US policy on the post-war status of Korea can be found in ibid. pp. 358-361.
12. On the deficiency in the proper understanding of Korea by US political and military leaders a good analysis is produced in Bruce Cummings, The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 428-444.
13. For a detailed discussion of this topic, see ibid., ch.5.
14. Ibid., ch.11.
15. Ibid., p.216.
16. For the full text of the Moscow agreement on Korea, see U.S. Department of State, Moscow Meeting of Foreign Ministers: December 16-26, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946), pp. 14-16. The Korean translation of this text by the North Korean authorities is found in Haebang Sanyon-gan ui Kungnaewoe Chungyo Ilchi [Chronology of Important Domestic and International Events in the Four-year Period since Liberation] (Pyongyang; Minchu Choson-sa, 1949), pp. 18-19. (hereafter designated Ilchi).
17. The Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs (Molotov) to the Secretary of State, at Moscow (translation), Moscow, April 19, 1947, in FRUS 1947 (6), p. 633.
18. Cummings, The Origins of the Korean War, p. 217.

Chapter Two The Origins of the Cadres

1. For a detailed account of the anti-Japanese struggle staged by the nationalists and communists in Manchuria in this period, see Kim Chun-yop and Kim Ch'ang-sun, Han'guk Kongsanchuui Undongsa [History of the Korean Communist Movement] new ed. (Seoul: Ch'onggye Yon'guso, 1986) vol.4 and vol.5, ch.19. For a brief account of this topic, see Dae-sook Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 230-251.
2. For a Chinese account of the NEAJUA, see Yang Jing-yu Jiangjunzhuan [Biography of General Yang Jing-yu] (Honon: Honon People's Publishing House, 1983), pp. 77-88.

3. On the actual strength of the NEAJUA and size of each 'division' or 'army' definite evidence is not available. My calculation is mainly based on information produced in Lim Un, The Founding of a Dynasty in North Korea (Tokyo: Jiyu-sha, 1982), pp. 73-81.
4. This table is based on the following: Lim Un, pp. 57-62, 73-79; Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-sik Lee, Communism in Korea, Part I: The Movement (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 392, Pukhan Ch'ongram [Facts on North Korea] (Seoul: Pukhan Yon'guso, 1983), pp. 1881-1919.
5. Han Chae-dok, Kim IlSung Changgun Kaesonki [The Triumphal Return of General Kim IlSung] 2nd ed. (Pyongyang: Minchu Choson-sa, 1949), pp. 189-217; Baik Bong, Kim IlSung, Biography (II) (Tokyo: Mirai-sha, 1961), pp. 363-381.
6. Lim Un, pp. 104-110.
7. Chong-sik Lee, Korean Workers' Party, A Short History (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1978), pp.66.
8. For a typical case of this kind, see Choson Chonsa [The History of Korea] vol.21 (Pyongyang: Kwahak Paekkwa Sachon Ch'ulp'ansa, 1981), pp. 29-51.
9. Lim Un, pp. 104-110.
10. Ibid., pp. 110-117
11. Ibid., p. 113, 130-131; Pukhan Ch'ongram, pp. 1881-1919; US Far East Command, G-2 Section "History of the North Korean Army" (Tokyo, 1952) in RG 407, box 907, Washington National Records Centre, pp. 90-100, (hereafter designated "HNKA").
12. Lim Un, pp. 116-119.
13. On the social and educational backgrounds of the Partisan group. see Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korean, Part II: The Society, pp. 920-929.
14. Yang Jing-yu Jianqjunzhuan, pp. 86-88.
15. On the North Korean account of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, see Baik Bong, Kim IlSung Biography (II), pp. 134-141.
16. For instance, until 1950, Ho Ka-i, a Soviet Korean, was actually dominating the party apparatus.
17. See Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 505-510.
18. Ibid., pp. 621-624.

19. For a detailed account of the KVA, see Kim and Kim, Han'guk Kongsanchuui Undongsa, vol.5 ch.20; Chong-sik Lee, The Politics of Korean Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 201-233; Dae-sook Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948, pp. 212-230.
20. Lim Un, pp. 134-141; Chong Chong-hwa Noktukkotch [A Biography of a Woman Patriot] (Seoul: Mi Wan, 1987), pp. 156-159.
21. On the KVC's transfer to north China there is some controversy. One theory is to emphasise the intrigue of the CCP in 'stealing' the KVC troops from the Kuomintang government. Chong-sik Lee, The Politics of Korean Nationalism, pp. 217-220. Another theory emphasises the internal conflict between the moderates and the extremists within the KVC. Dae-sook Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948, pp. 220-230.
22. Kim O-Song, "Mu Chong ron" [On Mu Chong], Chidocha Kunsang [On Korean Leaders] (Seoul: Taesong Ch'ulp'ansa, 1946), pp. 71-80; "HNKA," p. 98; Mu Chong, "Recollecting the Anti-Japanese Struggle Period," Nodong Shinmun, 2 February 1950, p.3.
23. Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, 178-180.
24. Ibid.
25. For a detailed account of the KVA in late 1945, see Kim Ch'ang-sun, Pukhan Sip'on-yon-sa [Fifteen Year History of North Korea] (Seoul: Chimun'gak, 1961), pp. 61-65.
26. Lim Un, p. 154.
27. Ibid., p. 129, 184; "HNKA," pp. 41-52.
28. Lim Un, pp. 189, 201.
29. About fifty Koreans graduated from the Anti-Japanese Military Political College in the war period.
30. Kim and Kim, Han'guk Kongsanchuui Undongsa, vol.1, ch. 2,3; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 3-11.
31. For profiles of active Soviet-Koreans, see Koon-woo Nam, The North Korean Communist Leadership, 1945-1964 (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1964), pp. 16-20.
32. Lim Un, pp. 141-147.
33. Ibid., pp. 144-147.
34. On the role of the Soviet-Koreans in the mechanics of Soviet control of North Korea, see U.S. Department of State, North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Takeover, Publication No. 7118, Far Eastern Series 103 (Washington, D.C., 1961), pp. 100-105.

Chapter Three

Laying the Groundwork

1. There has been a tendency to emphasise the role of the Romanyenko Command. However, Romanyenko was only in charge of the day-to-day business of implementing policies and programmes directed by Shtykov. See Lim Un, pp. 152-153. Lee Ki-bong, "A Grief in the Pyongyang Station Plaza," Pukhan (January 1987), pp. 119-121.
2. North Korea: A Case Study, p.13.
3. The South P'yongan Province Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence was a branch of the Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI), organised in Seoul on 16 August 1945. The central figure of the CPKI was Yo Un-hyong.
4. Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 332-333; Ilchi, pp. 7-18.
5. Koon-Woo Nam, pp. 20-23.
6. Kim IlSung, "On Building a Marxist-Leninist Party in Our Country and its Immediate Tasks," Works, vol.1, pp. 272-292. On the significance of the establishment of the North Korean Branch Bureau of the KCP, see Chong-sik Lee, Korean Worker's Party, A Short History, pp. 74-75.
7. However, this shift in the designation of the North Korean Branch Bureau was publicly announced only on 18 May 1946, when the party made a rebuking statement on the suspension of the US-USSR Joint Commission.
8. Kim IlSung, "On the Work of the Organisers at All Levels of the Communist Party of North Korea," Works, vol.1, pp. 416-427.
9. Ibid., p. 426.
10. On the significance of the Third Enlarged Executive Committee Meeting in late December 1945, see Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 428-43.
11. On the composition of the NKPPC, see Scalapino and Lee, ibid., pp. 435-439; Ilchi, pp. 29-30; ROK Ministry of National Defence, Haebang-kwa Kon'gun [Liberation and the Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces] (Seoul: The War History Compilation Committee, 1967) p. 77.
12. According to Lim Un, the people's rally held in Pyongyang on 14 October 1945 was in fact a reception welcoming the Soviet Army of Liberation. Lim Un, p. 149.
13. "HNKA," p. 8; US Armed Forces in Korea, "Intelligence Summaries, North Korea," (hereafter designated as "ISNK") (Seoul, 1948), no.30, p.3.

14. "HNKA," p.9; Ilchi pp. 11-12.
15. "HNKA," pp. 8-9; Ilchi, p.16.
16. Based on information from "Conclusions at the Second Session of the Provincial Chiefs of Security," dated 3 July 1946, in "Seized Materials" shipping advice 2005, box 6, item 6. WNRC.
17. "HNKA," pp. 15-16.
18. "Pukhan Ch'ongram, p. 519, Ilchi, p.22; "HNKA," pp. 15-16.
19. Kim IlSung, Works vol.4, p. 270.
20. Ibid.
21. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.2, p.65.
22. Choson Chonsa, vol. 23, pp. 291-293.
23. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 675-677.
24. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.2, p.65.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p.69.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 71.
30. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 677-679; "HNKA," p.13.
31. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 680-681; "HNKA," pp. 52-59.
32. The North Korean regime called the Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters the "Boan Kanbu Hullyon Taedaebu". A strict word-to-word translation of this North Korean designation would be "The Security Cadres Training Battalion Headquarters". In this thesis, a broader, reasonable translation of this designation is adopted, since it is absurd to call a military organisation having three divisions under its control a "Battalion".
33. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 680-681; Chu Yong-bok, Chosen Jinmin'gun no Nanshin to Haitai (Tokyo: Korea Hiron-sha, 1978), pp. 94-95.
34. The Security Cadres Training Corps was not under the control of the Security Bureau. Even the establishment of the Security Cadres Training Corps Headquarters, on 15 August 1946, was not publicly announced. Ilchi, p.93.

35. The three key figures of the Security Cadres Training Corps were not only constituted the inner core of a North Korean defence council but the inner core of the Kim IlSung group.

Chapter Four The Establishment of the KPA

1. Peter Lowe, The Origins of the Korean War, (London: Longman, 1986), p.34.
2. For a good discussion of this topic, see Joo-Hong Nam, pp. 20-23.
3. The US Imperialists Started the Korean War (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977), p.51.
4. Ibid., p.52.
5. Statement by General Shtykov cited by the Political Advisor in Korea (Jacobs) to the Secretary of State, Seoul, September 26, 1947, in FRUS: 1947 (2), p.816.
6. Ibid., pp. 835-836.
7. For an estimate of the US initiative on setting up the UNTCOK, see Leland M. Goodrich, Korea, A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956), pp. 49-50.
8. A summary of the North Korean arguments against the UNTCOK can be found in Han Hyo, "Han'guk Munche-wa Yonhapguk Kiku," [The Korean issue and the United Nations] Pukchoson Tongshin, no. 9 (Oct. 1947), pp.1-3.
9. Baik Bong, Kim IlSung, Biography (II), p.244.
10. Ibid.
11. The full context of the joint communique adopted by the conference on 30 June 1948 is found in Ilchi, pp. 163-64.
12. Ilchi, pp. 191-195.
13. The composition of the first North Korean cabinet is found in Ilchi, p.194. For the political backgrounds of the cabinet numbers, see Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 378-380.
14. On the merger of the North and South Korean Workers' Parties, see ibid., pp. 386-388.
15. "HNKA," pp. 18-19.
16. "ISNK," no.30 (30 January 1947), no. 34 (15 April 1947), no. 39 (31 May 1947).

17. "HNKA," pp. 52-59; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 684-689; US Armed Forces in Korea, G-2, "North Korea Today" (Seoul, 1949) pp. 28-32, in RG 332, box 57, WNRC.
18. "ISNK," no.42 (15 August 1947).
19. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 93-94; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 682-684.
20. US Armed Forces in Korea, G-2, "Korean Personalities in North Korea," (Seoul, 1947), p. 683, in RG 332, box 69, WNRC; Chu Yong-bok, p. 74; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 683.
21. Lim Un, p.130, 144-146, 200-201; North Korea; A Case Study, p.42.
22. "HNKA," pp. 14-15; Chu Yong-bok, pp. 93, 120.
23. On the identity of the two Kim Ils, see Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 513-514.
24. DPRK Ministry of National Defence, the Cultural Training Bureau, "Choson Inming'un-ui Chochik-kwa Mokchok-mitch Kwaop-ae Taehayo [On the organisation, purpose and tasks of the KPA] (Pyongyang, 1949); Kim Il, "Choson Immingun'un Sinhyongtae-ui Kundae ida" [The Korean People's Army is a new type army] Inmin (Feb. 1950), pp. 47-62.
25. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 133-136.
26. "Pukchoson Inmin Wiwonhoe Naemukuk Kiku-kup Samupunchang" [The organisation, and the distribution of business of the Interior Bureau of the North Korean People's Committee], dated February 1949, in "Seized Material," shipping advice 2006, box 14, item 26.
27. "HNKA," p.15.
28. Ibid., pp. 15-16; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 704.
29. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 703.
30. "HNKA," p. 16; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 694; Choson Chonsa, vol. 24, p. 132.
31. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.4, p. 290.
32. Ibid., p. 292.
33. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.4, p. 342; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 703-704.
34. This estimate of the total strength of the security forces in late 1948 is based on the information from "HNKA," map no.2.
35. Kim IlSung, Works, vol. 4, p. 83.

36. Ibid., p. 84.
37. Ibid., p. 85.
38. Ibid., p. 86.
39. Ibid.
40. The significance of the establishment of the KPA with regard to the unification issue was well expressed in both Kim IlSung's and Ch'oe Yong-gon's addresses on 8 February 1948. The text of Choe Yong-gon's address is found in Choson Inmin'gun [The Korean People's Army] (Pyongyang; Pukchoson Inminwiwonhoe Sonchon'guk, 1948), pp. 13-15.
41. Kim IlSung, Works, vol. 4, p.89.
42. Ibid.
43. US Far East Command, G-2, Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, "[KPA] Political Textbook," (Tokyo, 1950), p.22-32, in RG 242, box 1, WNRC.
44. Nodong Shinmun, 2 February 1951, p.1.
45. Ilchi, pp. 148-149.
46. Kim Ch'aek was concurrently Vice-Chairman of the NKPC. Ch'oe Yong-gon was concurrently President of the Korean Democratic Party (Choson Minchudang). Both men were in their late 40s. It is unlikely that either Kim Ch'aek or Ch'oe Yong-gon was made a subordinate of the other. In early July 1950 Kim Ch'aek was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Front Command while Ch'oe Yong-gon was serving as Minister of National Defence. In this case, too, it would be rather reasonable to see that kind of arrangement as a division of labour.
47. On the Soviet High Command during the Great Patriotic War, see Harriet F. Scott and William F. Scott, The Armed Forces of the USSR (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978), pp. 22-25.
48. For the South Korean claim on the 'illegality' of the KPA, see, for instance, Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 685.
49. Baik Bong, Kim IlSung, Biography (II), p.182.
50. Ibid.
51. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.4, p.88.
52. North Korea: A Case Study, pp. 45-46; "HNKA," p.22; Chu Yong-bok, pp. 140-142.

53. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 686-689; US Far East Command, G-2, "Order of Battle Information, North Korea," (Tokyo, 1951), pp. 29-32; "HNKA," pp. 56-59.
54. "HNKA," pp. 79-80; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 691-694.
55. "HNKA," p.23; "Order of Battle", Chart no.3.
56. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 317-318.

Chapter Five

Towards a War

1. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p.11.
2. Ibid., p.1
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 7.
5. Ibid., p. 10
6. In his address of 1 January 1949 Kim IlSung repeatedly emphasised that the a sound economic base was the material requisite for the reunification of the fatherland.
7. The full text of the North Korean-Soviet agreement can be found in Ilchi, pp. 256-258.
8. On the significance of the North Korean-Soviet agreement, see Kim IlSung, "Choguk-ui Tongil Tongnip-kwa Minchuwha-rul Wihayo" [For the Reunification, Independence and Democratisation of the Fatherland] (Pyongyang, 1949), vol.2, pp. 337-365.
9. Cited in Hak-joon Kim, Unification Policies of South and North Korea, pp. 76-77.
10. Baek Nam-woon, Soryon Insang [Impression of the Soviet Union] (Pyongyang: Choson Yoksa P'yonch'an Wiwonhoe, 1950), pp. 293-297.
11. New York Times, 6 May 1949, cited in Hak-joon Kim, op.cit., p.99.
12. There is a possibility that the report of the Chinese Central News Agency was a propaganda activity staged by the Chinese Nationalist Government. Otherwise, the News Agency could have mistaken the Harbin agreement of January 1949 on the repatriation of the Korean soldiers in the CCF for a defence pact between North Korea and the CCP.
13. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p. 80.
14. Ibid, pp. 80-81.

15. Chong-sik Lee, "Stalinism in the East; Communism in North Korea," in Robert A. Scalapino (ed.), The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p.126.
16. The full text of the programme is found in Choguk Tongil Minchchuui Chonson Kyolsong Taehoe Munhonchip [Collections of documents on the occasion of the establishment of the DFRF] (Pyongyang, 1949), pp. 1-4.
17. Ibid., pp. 5-15.
18. Ibid., pp. 15-16
19. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p. 90.
20. Ibid., p.91.
21. Ibid., p.92.
22. By 'policy objective' I mean, 'planning and programming of a declaratory goal'.
23. Kim Nam-sik, Namrodang Yon'gu [A Study of the South Korean Workers' Party] (Seoul: Tolbaegae, 1984), pp. 404; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 386-389.
24. Kim IlSung, Works, vol. 5, p.106.
25. Scalapino and Lee, op.cit., pp. 385-388.
26. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p. 108.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p.109.
29. Khrushchev Remembers, trans. and ed. Strove Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), pp. 367-368.
30. David J. Dallin, Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin (Philadelphia: Lippicott, 1961), p.60.
31. Adam B. Ulam, The Rivals: America and Russia since World War II (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p.518.
32. A good summary of the theories on the origins of the Korean War has been advanced in Hak-joon Kim, Unification Policies of South and North Korea, ch.3. On the whole this author has the same thoughts as Professor Kim's on the origins of the war, produced in "a tentative summary" in ibid., pp. 114-115. On this North Korean initiative theory a good discussion is found in Kim, Key-dong, "Who initiated the Korean War?" in James Cotton and Ian Neary

(ed.), The Korean War in History (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 37-50.

33. Ulam, p. 518.
34. See Hak-joon Kim, op.cit., pp. 89-105.
35. A typical 'grand conspiracy theory' pointing at the Soviet Union as the mastermind of the Korean War can be found Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 909-921.
36. For an historical analysis of the Russian 'ambition' towards Korea see Hak-joon Kim, Korea in Soviet East Asian Policy (Seoul: The Institute of International Peace Studies, Kyunghee University, 1986), pp. 1-12.
37. Joo-hong Nam made a good summary of the implications of the withdrawal of the US troops from Korea in early 1949 as follows:

Thus, with the removal of the US occupation forces, it was reasonable to conclude that the US would not regard an action by any other power, especially the Russians, as what an NSC paper termed a casus belli for its intervention.

Joo-Hong Nam, America's Commitment to South Korea, p.29.
38. For a good summary on the evolution of NSC-68, see Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 379- 381.
39. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p.301.
40. Ibid., p.302.
41. Ibid.
42. Ch'oe Yong-gon, "The KPA is fully prepared to annihilate the enemy at any time," Inmin (February, 1950), pp. 39-46; Kang Gon, "The Korean People's Army Seeing in the New Year," Choquk Powi-rul Wihayo (organ of th FDSA) (January, 1950), pp. 21-31.
43. Intelligence Reports on the KPA, prepared by ROK Army, G-2, in Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 749-753.
44. U.S. Armed Forces in Korea "North Korea Today," pp. 25-28, in RG332, box 57, WNRC.
45. Cited in Kim Chum-Kon, The Korean War, (Seoul: Kwangmyong Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 259-260. On this issue the only first-hand source so far is an article written by Lt. Col. Kyril Kalinov, a Soviet defector. Kalinov was a member of the Soviet special military mission to North Korea. His article "How the Russians Built the North Korean Army," appeared in The Reporter (New York), 26 September 1950. See also Jin Chull Soh, "The role

of the Soviet Union in Preparations for the Korean War," Journal of Korean Affairs, vol.3, no.41, (January 1974), pp. 6-8.

46. Kim Chum-kon, p.260; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 689, 706.
47. Kim Chum-kon, pp. 260-262.
48. For instance, Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 705.
49. Kim Chum-kon, p. 259.
50. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 705.
51. With regard to the Soviet intention behind the KPA expansion programme Kalinov stated that "Their purpose was to organise and train a modernised Korean People's Army in not more than eighteen months to replace the recently withdrawn Soviet troops" cited in Hak-joon Kim, Unification Policies of South and North Korea, pp. 92-93.
52. The Soviet programme on the expansion of the KPA is well contrasted with the US programme of building up the ROK troops. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 319.
53. "HNKA," p. 79; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 691-694; Chu Yong-bok, pp. 165-169.
54. "HNKA," pp. 59-60; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 690.
55. "HNKA," pp. 62; "Order of Battle," p. 34.
56. "HNKA," pp. 59-60; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 690.
57. "HNKA," p. 52, 54, 56; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 693.
58. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p. 178.
59. Ibid., p. 180.
60. See Chu Yong-bok, pp. 201-202.
61. For a good discussion of this pseudo-warfare between the North and South, see John Merrill, "Internal Warfare in Korea," Bruce Cummings (ed.), Child of Conflict, pp. 136-162.
62. The North Korean account of the 'people's struggle' in the south can be found in Yi Ki-sok, "The Heroic Struggle of the People's Guerrilla Force in the South," Inmin, (July 1950), pp. 45-61; Yi Sung-yop, "Let's Strengthen All-Nation Support for the Heroic Struggle of the Guerrillas in the South," Inmin, Feb. 1950, pp. 63-72.
63. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 451-458.

64. Ibid., pp. 459-488.
65. Ibid., pp. 494-498
66. Ilchi, pp. 202-204; Choson Chonsa, vol.24, pp. 523-529; Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p.3; Kim Nam-sik, pp. 387-389.
67. Kim Nam-sik, pp. 395-398.
68. Ibid., pp. 412-413; Lee Tae, Nambu-gun [The South Corps] (Seoul: Turae, 1988), vol.1, pp. 254-257; ROK Army, G-2, Kongbi Yonhyok [A History of the Communist Guerillas] (Seoul, 1971), pp. 238-248.
69. Kim Nam-sik, pp. 412-419; Lee Ki-sok, op.cit., pp. 51-54. 210.
70. Kongbi Yonhyok, p.247; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 498-505.
71. Through the punitive operations, some officers were emerging as promising figures of the ROK Army. Chong Il-kwon, two time Army Chief of Staff, and Kim Baek-il, Deputy Chief of Staff in 1950 were especially prominent among them. Both men were graduates of the Manchukuo Military Academy and had abundant experiences in the punitive operations against the communist guerillas in Manchuria.
72. For the enmity between the north and south Korean communist leadership, see Koon-woo Nam, The North Korean Communist Leadership, pp. 80-84. In 1955 Pak Hon-yong was executed on the charge of 'espionage activities for the US imperialists'.
73. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 506-507, 703.
74. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 703-704. A good source material on the mission and composition of the 3rd Security Brigade is Kim IlSung's instructions given to the commander of the brigade on his appointment, dated 7 August 1948. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.4, pp. 338-342.
75. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p.507.
76. The US Imperialist Started the Korean War, p.110.
77. Ibid., p.111.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p.112
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., p.97.
83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.
85. John Merrill suspects that this so-called 'policy of bluff' was chiefly designed to secure an American security commitment and more military aid. John Merrill, in Bruce Cummings (ed.), The Child of Conflict, p.145.
86. Kim Chum-kon, p.213.
87. The US Imperialists Started the Korean War, p.93.
88. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p.210.
89. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p.11.
90. Ibid., p.38.
91. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5. p.245.
92. For concept of 'limited war' and 'crisis management' see John Baylis et al., Contemporary Strategy (London: Croom Helen, 1978), pp. 121-124, 152-154.
93. General Kim Sok-won was a legendary field commander in the Sino-Japanese War since 1937. In the early phase of the war it was allegedly said that a Japanese battalion could match a Chinese Division. Such an emphasis of extreme spiritualism in the Japanese Army clearly influenced the founding members of the ROK Army, who had mostly Japanese Army backgrounds.
94. The incomprehensible lack of vigilance on the part of the ROK political and military leadership on the eve of the invasion may well be considered in connection with this latter point.
95. ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, Han'guk Chonsa [Military History of Korea] (Seoul, 1984), pp. 601-602; "HNKA," p.20.
96. "HNKA," p.47.
97. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 697-700; Robert R. Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953, revised ed. (Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, USAF, 1983), p.19.
98. See the Moscow decision of December 1948 on expanding the KPA in the preceding section.
99. On the situation of the North Korean Air Force in the initial phase of the Korean War, see Futrell, op.cit., pp. 98-103.
100. At that time, the strength of the North Korean Democratic Youth Union (a Konsomal organisation) amounted to 1.3 million. Tongmaeng Kangryong mit Kyuyak Haesol [The Explanation of the

Programme and Rules of the Democratic Youth Union] (Pyongyang: Pukchoson Minchong, 1949).

101. "HNKA," pp. 69, 72, 74; Kim Chum-kon, pp. 252-253; "Order of Battle," pp. 21, 25-27.
102. "Instruction from Mu Chong, Chief of Artillery, to subordinate artillery troops," dated 13 June 1950, in "Seized Material," shipping advice 2013, box 1, item 6.
103. "HNKA," pp. 69, 72, 74; Chu Yong-bok, p.207.
104. "Training programme for the First Phase in 1950" issued from Commander of the 3rd Camp, 1st Democratic Youth Training Centre, to subordinate units dated 22 March 1950, in "Seized Materials," shipping advice 2009, box 6, item 58.
105. "Summer Combat Training Programme, 1950," issued from 391th unit, KPA to subordinate units, dated 8 June 1950, in "Seized Materials" shipping advice 2012, box 5, item 95.
106. "Summer Combat Training Programme", issued from Commander of 3rd Camp, 1st Democratic Youth Training Centre, to subordinate units, dated 29 May 1950, in "Seized Materials" shipping advice 2009, box 6, item 58.
107. "HNKA," pp. 69, 72, 73, 74-75.
108. "HNKA," pp. 52, 57, 62; "Order of Battle," pp. 5, 11, 15.
109. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 703-704; "HNKA," pp. 64, 66, 67; "Order of Battle," pp. 17-19, 33, 35, 37.
110. "HNKA," pp. 70; "Order of Battle," p.23; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 708.
111. On the designation of the 7th Division there is a controversy. One theory is that the division was redesignated the 12th Division in early July 1950. Ch Yong-bok, p. 296; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 729. Another theory is that the redesignation was made before the beginning of the war. "HNKA," p. 70. According to Reconnaissance Order No.1, issued by Chief of Intelligence, KPA, to chiefs of staff of the KPA divisions, on 18 June 1950, the division was referred to as the 12th Division. Reconnaissance Order No.1, translated by G-2 Section, US Far East Command, filed in RG 242, box 1, item 6, WNRC.
112. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 212-223; "HNKA," p.60.
113. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.5, p.8.
114. Ibid., p.279.
115. Nodong Shinmun, 24 June 1963.

116. North Korea: A Case Study, p.109.
117. Choson Chonsa, vol.24, pp. 281-284.
118. North Korea: A Case Study, p.81.
119. Pak Chae-kyu et al., Pukhan Kunsu Chongch'ae-kron [On Military Policy of North Korea] (Seoul: The Institute for Far East Studies, Kyungnam University, 1983), pp. 71-73.
120. North Korea: A Case Study, p.81.
121. Ibid.
122. The KPA armament and equipment introduced in April 1950 from the Soviet Union were all brand new materiel. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 219-223.
123. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 223-224.
124. Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, p. 731.
125. According to Chu Yong-bok, the Soviet operation team remained at least until mid-July 1950, and participated in the planning of the "Battle of Taejon". Chu Yong-bok, p.322.

Chapter Six The Trials of the War

1. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 232-233.
2. Ibid., p.239.
3. Ibid., pp. 239-240.
4. For the comparison of the military strength of North and South Korea in May 1950, see ROK Ministry of National Defence, The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War (Seoul: The War History Compilation Committee, 1972), vol.1, pp. 77-78 (hereafter designated HUNF).
5. HUNF, vol.1, pp. 79-80; Kim Chum-kon, pp. 274-289; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp 738-739
6. HUNF, vol.1, p.98; Robert F. Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-53, pp. 16-20; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 581-584, 625-626.
7. ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, Han'guk Chonsa, pp. 326-331.
8. Ibid., pp. 309-311.

9. For a description of the ROK Army leadership in this period, see Han Yong-won, Ch'anggun [The Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces] (Seoul: Pakyongsa, 1984), pp. 108-112.
10. "HNKA," pp. 90-100; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea I, pp. 392-393.
11. This table is based on information from the following: "HNKA," pp. 90-100; "Order of Battle," pp. 8-13; Pukhan Chongram, pp. 1019-1059.
12. A good summary of this scenario is found in Hak-joon Kim, Unification Policies of South and North Korea, pp. 105-110.
13. On Pak Hon-yong's downfall in 1953, see Scalapino and Lee, op.cit., pp. 436-452. A detailed discussion on this issue has been advanced in Kim Nam-sik, Namrodong Yon'gu, ch.19.
14. This kind of scenario is well summarised in ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, Han'guk Chonsa, pp. 294-298.
15. "Intelligence Plan of the North Korean Army for an Attack Operation, 1950," classified "Soviet Secret, Most Important," trans, FEC, G-2, Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, in RG 242, box 1, WNRC.
16. Chu Yong-bok, pp. 233-234; "HNKA," pp. 41-45; Lim Un, pp. 172-176.
17. On the deployment of the KPA divisions on the eve of the invasion see HUNF, vol.4, pp. 25-30.
18. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.6, p.4.
19. Ibid., pp. 1-3.
20. The typical North Korean version of the origins of the Korean War, which they claimed was 'provoked by the US government,' can be found in The US Imperialists Started the Korean War.
21. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.6, pp.4-5.
22. Ibid., p.5
23. Ibid., p.11.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 158.
26. Choguk Haebang Chonchoengsa [History of the Fatherland Liberation War], vol.1 (Pyongyang: Kwahak Baekkwa Sachon Ch'ulp'ansa, 1981) pp. 98-99; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea II, pp. 934-935.

27. For the defence plan of the ROK Army, see Kim Chum-kon, pp. 310-312.
28. General Kim Hong-il's contribution in the initial phase of the war was well phrased in President Rhee's praise that I wish I could have promoted General Kim Hong-il to five-star general. (There has been no Field-M Marshals or Admirals of the Fleet in the ROK Armed Forces as yet.)
29. See Kim Chum-kon, pp. 290-291.
30. Ibid., pp. 281-293; Haebang-kwa Kon'gun, pp. 763-765.
31. On the 'battle of Ch'unch'on' see HUNF, vol.1, pp. 82-84. The North Korean version of this battle is very brief, just in one sentence reflecting dismay of the KPA leadership on the KPA performance in the battle. Choguk Haebang Chonchaengsa, vo.1, p.115.
32. During the first five days of the Korean War the loss of ROK troops amounted to 44,000 men. Among them more than 23,000 soldiers later returned to their units.
33. For the Truman Administration's decision to intervene in Korea, see Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950 (New York: Free Press, 1968) and David Rees, Korea, The Limited War (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), ch.2.
34. Broadcast speech by Pak Hon-yong, "Appealing to the Members of the Worker's Party of Korea in the south, and to the entire people," Bowi (organ of the North Korean Ministry of the Interior), 29 June 1950, p.2
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid..
37. Choguk Haebang Chonchangsa, vol.1, p.140.
38. "HNKA," p.43; Chu Yong-bok, pp. 295-296.
39. Baik Bong, Kim IlSung Biography (II) p. 281.
40. "HNKA," pp. 71-93. On the exact time of the Soviet operation team's departure definite evidence is yet to be found. According to Chu Yong-bok, Lt. Gen. Vasiliev and his staff were still seen in mid-July 1950. Chu Yong-bok, p.322.
41. Choguk Haebang Chonchoengsa, vol.1, pp. 162-163; Chu Yong-bok, p.255; North Korea: A Case Study, p.114.
42. "HNKA," pp. 64-69; "Order of Battle," pp. 17-19.
43. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.6, pp. 27-28.

44. Ibid., pp. 32-33.
45. Appleman, South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1960), p.210
46. North Korean account of the battle of Taejon is found in Choson Inmingun (organ of the KPA), 29 July 1950.
47. A vivid account of the disarray in the US troops in this retreat phase can be found in Edwin P. Hoyt, The Pusan Perimeter (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), ch.9.
48. Cited in HUNF, vol.1, p.97.
49. HUNF, vol.4, pp. 176-179.
50. Ibid., pp. 180-181.
51. Ibid., pp. 179-180.
52. ROK Army, Office of Military History, Han'guk Chonchaeng, 10 vols. (Seoul, 1986), vol.2, pp. 243-244.
53. Ibid., pp. 232-233.
54. HUNF, vol.4, pp. 211-212; Choquk Haebang Chonchoengsa, vol.1, pp. 272-275.
55. Futrell, The US Air Force in Korea 1950-1953, p. 139.
56. HUNF, vol.4, pp. 212-218.
57. "HNKA," pp. 43, 94, 95; Nodong Shinmun, 11 September 1950, p.1.
58. In the worst days of UN Forces retreat in December 1950, some US officials were actually contemplating such a contingency plan. Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Secretary of State, 12 January 1951, in FRUS 1951 (7), pp. 66-7.
59. HUNF, vol.4, pp. 47-48.
60. ROK Army, Office of Military History, Hang'uk Chonchoeng, vol.4, pp. 79-80.
61. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 98-99; "HNKA," p.49; "Combat Order No.2," issued by the Inch'on Area Defence Command to the 107th Regiment, dated 28th August, 1950, in "Seized Materials", shipping advice 2009, box 7.
62. "Combat Order No.4," issued by the Inch'on Area Defence Command to subordinate units, dated 9 Septebmer 1950, in Seized Materials, shipping advice 2009, box 7.

63. Chojuk Haebang Chonchoengsa, vol.2, pp. 32-33, 48, 51, 55.
64. Ibid., pp. 61-64; HUNF, vol.4, pp.281-294.
65. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.6, p.117.
66. Ibid., p.120.
67. The text of General McArthur's ultimatum to Kim IlSung on 1 October 1950 is found in FRUS 1950 (8), pp. 786-787.
68. "Order 70," issued by Kim IlSung to KPA commanders on 14 October 1950, in Seized Material, shipping advice 2012, box 6.
69. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.6, pp. 121-126; Chojuk Haebang Chonchoengsa, vol.2, pp. 89-92; North Korea; A Case Study, pp. 86,114.
70. Chojuk Haebang Chonchoengsa, vol.2, pp. 91-92.
71. A Korean returnee from Manchuria provided a valuable information on this issue. Kim Chung-saeng, Choson Ilbo, 6 April 1989, p.5.
72. "HNKA," pp. 92-99.
73. "HNKA," pp. 41-42.
74. Chojuk Haebang Chonchoengsa, vol.2, pp. 162-178.
75. For a good discussion of the MacArthur controversy see James McGovern, To the Yalu: From the Chinese Invasion of Korea to MacArthur's Dismissal (New York: Morrow, 1972).
76. On this issue, a good discussion has been produced in HUNF, vol.4 pp. 299-302.
77. Kim IlSung, Works, vol.6, pp.156-159.

Conclusions

1. Merrill in Cummings (ed.), Child of Conflict, pp. 158-159.

Bibliography

1. Primary Sources

Korea (North)

Baik Bong. Kim IlSung Biography. 3 Vols. Tokyo: Mirai-sha, 1961.

Bowi (Organ of the North Korean Interior Ministry).

Ch'oe Hyun. "Recollecting the Anti-Japanese Partisan Period," Nodong Shinmun (Organ of the WPK), 20 Jan 1950.

Choson Inmingun (Organ of the KPA).

Ch'oe Yong-gon. "Address to the KPA Troops on the Occasion of the Founding of the KPA on 8 February, 1948," Choson Inmin'gun [The Korean People's Army]. Pyongyang: Pukchoson Inminwiwonhoe Sonchon'guk, 1948, pp. 13-15.

_____. "The KPA is fully Prepared to Annihilate the Enemy at Any Time," Inmin (Organ of the DPRK), February 1950, pp. 39-46.

Choquk Tongil Minchuchui Chonson Kyolsong Toehoe Munhonchip [Documentary Collections on the Founding of the Democratic Front for Fatherland Reunification]. Pyongyang: The Secretariat of the Central Standing Committee of the DFRF, 1948.

Choson Chonsa [The History of Korea]. Pyongyang Kwahak Paekkwa Sachon Ch'ulp'ansa, 1981. Vols. 21-27 esp. Vol. 24, The History of the Fatherland Liberation War, I.

Haebanhu Samnyon-kan ui Kungnaewoe Chungyo Ilchi [Chronology of Important International and Domestic Events in the Three-Year Period Since Liberation] P'yongyang: Minchu Chosonsa, 1948.

Haebanghu Sanyon-kan ui Kungnaewoe Chungyo Ilchi (revised ed. of the above work). Pyongyang, 1949.

Han Chae-dok. Kim IlSung Changgun Kaesonki [The Triumphal Return of General Kim IlSung] 2nd ed. P'yongyang: Minchu Chosonsa, 1949.

Han Hyo. "The Korea Issue and the United Nations," Pukchoson Tongshin (Organ of the NKPC), no.9. October 1949, pp. 1-3.

Hyon Chong-min. "The People's Army is the School for the Working Youths in Political, Technical and Combat Activities." Kulloja (Organ of the WPK), no.2, January 1950, pp. 51-65.

Inmin Kundae-wa Chongnyon [The People's Army and the Youths]. P'yongyang: Ch'ongnyon Saengwhal-sa, 1949.

Kang Gon. "General Kim IlSung's Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Unit Constitutes the Combatant Core of the Korean People's Army," Kulloja, no.2, January 1950, pp. 10-26.

_____. "The People's Army Seeing in the New Year," Choguk Powi-rul Wihayo (Organ of the FDSA), January 1950, pp. 21-31.

Kim Il. "The Korean People's Army is a New Type Army," Inmin, February 1950, pp. 47-62.

_____. "The Korean People's Army is the Army Faithful to the People," Kulloja, no.3, February 1950, pp. 14-22.

_____. "Leninist-Stalinist Theories on Building the Armed Forces during the Proletariat Dictatorship Period," Kulloja, January 1950, pp. 27-39.

Kim IlSung. Works. 30 Volumes. Pyongyang: Choson Nodongdong Ch'ulp'ansa, 1980-1988, especially Vols. 1-6.

Kim Kang. "The Korean People's Army is Growing under the Full Backing and Support of the Korean People," Kulloja, no.2, January 1950, pp. 40-50.

Kim Tun-yong. "The Situation will be Decided by the Power of the People," Inmin, November 1949, pp. 27-40.

Minchon Choson (organ of the DPRK).

Mu Chong. "Recollecting the Anti-Japanese Struggle Period," Nodong Shinmun, 2 February 1950.

Nodong Shinmun (Organ of the WPK).

O Baek-ryong. "Recollecting the Anti-Japanese Partisan Period," Nodong Shinmun, 2 February 1950.

Pak Hon-yong. "Reports on the Occasion of the 4th Anniversary of the 8.15 Liberation," Kulloja, No.16. August 1949, pp. 3-20.

_____. "The Present Situation in South Korea and the Missions of the Patriotic Parties and Social Organisations," Inmin, February 1950, pp. 14-33.

_____. "Appealing to the Members of the Workers' Party of Korea in the South and to the Entire People in the South," Bowi, 29 June 1950.

Pak Hun-il. "Recollecting the Anti-Japanese Partisan Period," Nodong Shinmun, 23 June 1950.

Pak Ki-sok. "The Soviet Army is a New Kind of Army Serving the Causes of Friendship and Peace among the People of the World," Kulloja, no.2, January 1950, pp. 75-90.

Sin Yong-ku. "The Korean People's Army is the Powerful Armed Forces Serving the Korean People," Inmin, April 1949, pp. 14-19.

Soviet Yonmaeng-kwa Choson Munche [the Soviet Union and the Korean Issue]. Originally published by the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Pyongyang: Kukche Munche Yon'guhoe, 1949.

US Imperialists Started the Korean War. P'yongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977.

Wang Yon. "Recollecting the Anti-Japanese Partisan Period," Nodong Shinmun, 24 January 1950.

Yi Ki-sok. "The Heroic Struggle of the People's Guerrilla Force in the South," Inmin, July 1950, pp. 45-61.

Yi Mun-yol. "The Development of People's Democracy in Korea," Kulloja, no.4, February 1950, pp. 62-80.

Yi Sung-yop. "The Strengthened Democratic Strength of the Korean People will certainly Lead the Struggle for the Reunification of the Fatherland to Victory," Kulloja, no.16, August 1949, pp. 30-38.

_____. "Let's Fulfill the Reunification of the Fatherland Peacefully," Kulloja, no.19, August 1949, pp. 7-13.

_____. "The People's Guerrilla Force Struggles in the South for the Reunification of the Fatherland," Kulloja, no.1, January 1950, pp. 15-25.

_____. "Let's Strengthen All-Nation Support for the Heroic Struggle of the Guerrillas in the South," Inmin, February 1950, pp. 63-72.

Yim Hae. "The Importance of Support Efforts for the People's Army in the Struggle for the Defence of the Fatherland," Kulloja, no.2, January 1950, pp. 66-94.

_____. "The Ever-Victorious Mighty Soviet Army," Kulloja, no.4, February 1950, pp. 9-18.

* Minchok Bowisong [Ministry of National Defence], the General Staff.

"Kunsa Chisik" [Military Studies], January 1950.

"Kunmuwon Bonggup Kyuchong" [Regulation on Payment for Servicemen], August 1950.

"Yoksa Kirok-ae Kwanhan Kyosi" [Instruction on Recording Unit History], January 1949.

_____, the Cultural Training Bureau.

"Choson Inmin'gun-ui Chochik-Kwa Mokchok-mit Kwaop-ae Taehayo" [On the Organisation, Purpose and Task of the Korean People's Army], February 1949.

"Chongchi Bodo-mit Tamhwa Charyo" [Materials for Political Education], June 1950.

"Sonchonon Such'aek" [Handbook for Propagandist Workers], March 1980.

Korea (South)

Ministry of National Defence.

_____. Han'guk Chonchaengsa [History of the Korean War] 11 Vols. Seoul: The War History Compilation Committee, 1967-1980, esp. Vol.1 Haebang-kwa Kon'gun [Liberation and the Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces].

_____. Han'guk Chonran Ilnyonchi [Chronological History of the First Year of the Korean War]. Seoul: The War History Compilation Committee, 1951.

_____. History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War. 5 Vols. Seoul: The War History Compilation Committee, 1972-74.

_____. Han'guk Chonsa [The Military History of Korea]. Seoul: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1984.

Army Headquarters

_____. 6.25 Sabyon Yukkun Chonsa [History of the 6.25 Incident]. 7 Vols. Seoul: Office of Military History, 1952-1959.

_____. Han'guk Chonchaeng [The Korean War]. 10 Vols. Seoul: Office of Military History, 1986.

_____. Kongbi Yonhyok [History of the Guerrillas]. Seoul, G-2, 1971.

_____. Pukhan Koeroegun Pudae Kyongreyok [Unit History of the North Korean Puppet Army]. Seoul: G-2, 1964.

_____. Pukkoe 6.25 Namch'im Punsok [Analysis of the North Korean Invasion] Seoul: G-2, 1970.

Kim Nam-sik et al. Han'guk Hyondaesa Charyo Ch'ongso [Collections of Source Materials on the Contemporary History of Korea]. 15 Vols. Seoul: Tolbaegae, 1986.

Kim Chun-yop et al. Pukhan Yon'gu Charyochip [Collections of Source Materials in North Korean Studies]. 2 Vols. Seoul: Korea University Press, 1969-1974.

Pukhan Ch'ongram [Facts on North Korea]. Seoul: Pukhan Yon'guso, 1983.

United States

* Washington National Records Centre, Suitland, Md.

United States, Far East Command. Record Group 242, "Captured Enemy Documents."

- Major Items -

"Intelligence Plan of the North Korean Army for an Attack Operation," originally classified "Soviet Secret, Most Important." Issued by Chief of the Reconnaissance Bureau, KPA General Staff, to subordinate units, dated 20 June 1950, filed in Box 1.

"File of Orders, handwritten in Russian, issued by Chief of the Reconnaissance Bureau to Chiefs of Staff of KPA Divisions," dated 18 June 1950, filed in Box 1.

_____. "History of the North Korean Army." Tokyo: G-2 Section, 1952, in Record Group 407, Box 707.

United States Armed Forces in Korea. Record Group 232, "USAFIK XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section."

- Major Items -

"North Korea Today," in Box 57.

"Korean Personalities in North Korea," in Box 69.

United States Army. Record Group 319, "Intelligence Summaries, North Korea" (Army Staff), Intelligence (G-2) Library, "P." File, 1946-1951.

_____. "North Korean Order of Battle," Intelligence Research Project No. 5942, dated 1 September 1950. Washington D.C. 1950.

* Published Documents

Department of State Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1961.

_____. Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1955.

_____. Foreign Relations of the United States. 1950. Vol VI. The Far East. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1972.

- _____. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950. Vol. VI, Korea. Washington D.C.:GPO, 1976.
- _____. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951. Vol. VII. Korea and China. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1976.
- _____. North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Takeover. Washington D.C., 1960.
- Appleman, Roy E. South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950. Vol.I in the Series, The United States Army in the Korean War. Washington D.C.: GPO, 1960.
- Futtrell, Robert F. The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953. revised ed. Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983.

2. Secondary Sources

Books in Korean, Japanese and Chinese.

- Chong, Chong-hwa. Noktukkot [Biography of a Woman Patriot]. Seoul: MiWan, 1987.
- Chu, Yong-bok. Chosen Jinmin'gun no Nanshin to Haitai [The Invasion and Defeat of the Korean People's Army]. Tokyo Korea Heiron-sha, 1978.
- Han Yong-won. Ch'anggun [The Founding of the ROK Armed Forces]. Seoul: Pakyongsa, 1984.
- Kim Ch'ang-sun. Pukhan Sip'on'yon-sa [Fifteen-Year History of North Korea]. Seoul: Chimun'gak, 1961.
- Kim, Chun-yop and Kim Ch'ang-sun. Han'guk Kongsan Chuui Undonsa [History of the Korean Communist Movement]. 5 Vols. New ed. Seoul: Ch'onggye Yon'guso, 1986.
- Kim, Nam-sik. Namrodong Yon'gu [A Study of the South Korean Workers' Party]. Seoul: Tolbaegae, 1984.
- Lee, Tae. Nambugun [The Southern Corps]. Seoul: Turae, 1988.
- Pak, Chae-kyu et al. Pukhan Kunsu Chongch'aengron [On the Military Policy of North Korea]. Seoul: The Institute for Far East Studies, Kyungnam University, 1983.
- Yang Jing-yu Jiangjunzhuan [Biography of General Jing-yu]. Honan: Honan People's Publishing House, 1983.

Books and Articles in English

- Baileys, John et al. Contemporary Strategy. London: Croom Helen, 1978.
- Cho, Soon-sung. Korea in World Politics, 1945-50: An Evaluation of American Responsibility. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- Cummings, Bruce. Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-47. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- . ed. Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relations, 1943-1953. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983.
- Dallin, David J. Soviet Foreign Policy after Stalin. Philadelphia: Lippicott, 1961.
- Djilas, Milovan. Conversations with Stalin. Trans. Michael B. Petrovich. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962.
- Fahrenbach, T.R. This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness. New York: MacMillan, 1963.
- Goodrich, Leland M. Korea, A Case Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956.
- Gupta, Karunakar. "How Did the Korean War Begin?" China Quarterly, No.52 (Oct-Dec 1972), pp. 699-716.
- Goulden, Joseph C. Korea: The Untold Story of the War. New York: Times, 1982.
- Halliday, John and Bruce Cummings. Korea: the Unknown War. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988.
- Hastings, Max. The Korean War. London: Michael Joseph, 1987.
- Heller, Francis H. ed. The Korean War: A 25 Year Perspective. Lawrence, KS: Regents Press of Kansas, 1977.
- Hoyt, Edwin P. The Pusan Perimeter. New York: Stein and Day, 1984.
- Khrushchev Remembers. Trans. and ed. Strove Talbott. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970.
- Kim, Chum-kon. The Korean War. Seoul: Kwangmyong Ch'ulp'unsa, 1973.
- Kim, Gye-dong. "Who Initiated the Korean War?" James Cotton and Ian Neary ed. The Korean War. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989.

- Kim, Hak-joon. Korea in Soviet Far East Asian Policy. Seoul: The Institute of International Peace Studies, Kyunghee University, 1986.
- _____. Unification Policies of South and North Korea: A Comparative Study. Seoul: Seoul National University, 1986.
- Leckbie, Robert. Conflict: The History of the Korean War, 1950-53. New York: Futnam's, 1962.
- Lee, Chong-sik. Korean Worker's Party, A Short History. Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1978.
- _____. The Politics of Korean Nationalism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.
- _____. "Stalinism in the East: Communism in North Korea," Robert A. Scalapino ed., The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements. Englewood, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965.
- Lim Un. The Founding of a Dynasty in North Korea. Tokyo: Jiyu-sha, 1982.
- Lowe, Peter. The Origins of the Korean War. London: Longman, 1986.
- McGovern, James. To the Yalu: From the Chinese Invasion of Korea to MacArthur's Dismissal. New York: Morrow, 1972.
- Merryl, John. "Internal Warfare in Korea," Bruce Cummings ed. Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relations, 1943-53.
- Nam, Joo-hong. America's Commitment to South Korea: The First Decade of the Nixon Doctrine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Nam, Koon-woo. The North Korean Communist Leadership, 1945-64. University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1964.
- Paige, Glenn D. The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950. New York: Free Press, 1968.
- Rees, David. Korea, The Limited War. New York: St. Martin's, 1964.
- _____. ed. The Korean War: Its History and Tactics. New York: Crescent, 1984.
- Saunders, Jack. "Records in the National Archives Relating to Korea, 1945-1950," Bruce Cummings ed. Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953.
- Scalapino, Robert A. and Chong-sik Lee. Communism in Korea. 2 Vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Scott, Harrier F. and William F. Scott. The Armed Forces of the USSR. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978.

Soh, Jin-chull. "The Role of the Soviet Union in Preparation for the Korean War," Journal of Korean Affairs. Vol.3. No.4 (January 1984), pp. 3-14.

Suh, Dae-sook. The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

Stone, I.F. The Hidden History of the Korean War. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952.

Ulam, Adam B. The Rivals: America and Russia since World War II. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Weighley, Russell F. The American Way of War. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1973.

